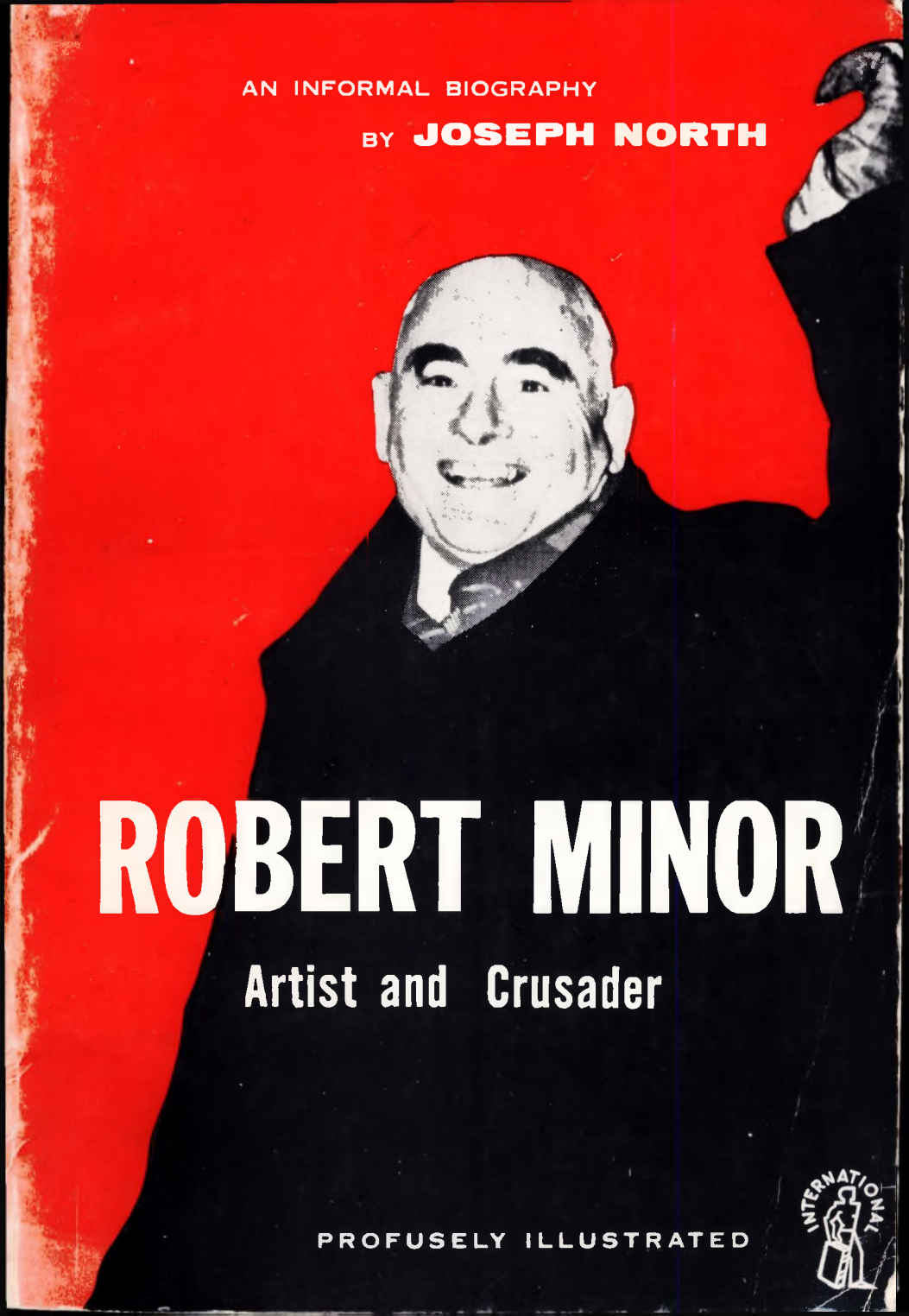
AN INFORMAL BIOGRAPHY

BY **JOSEPH NORTH**

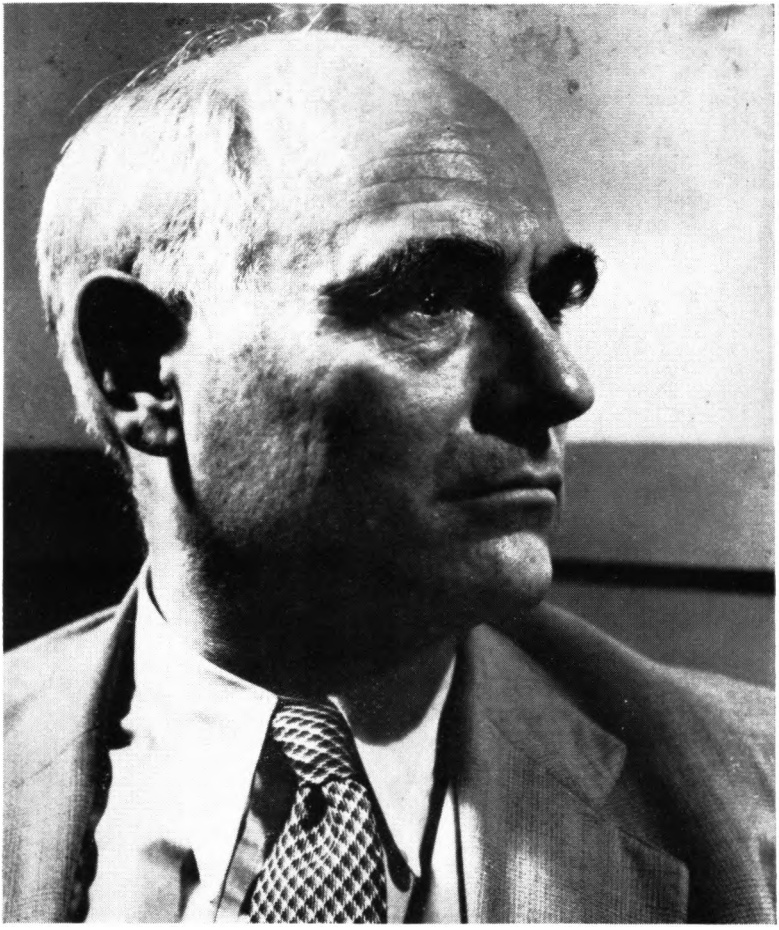


ROBERT MINOR

Artist and Crusader

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED

INTERNATIONAL



ROBERT MINOR
1884—1952

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Artist and Crusader

AN INFORMAL BIOGRAPHY

BY **JOSEPH NORTH**

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FOR HELEN

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Author's Note

A generation that knew Robert Minor loved him. But primarily I wrote this biography for a generation that did not know this extraordinary American. There is so much to say about him and his times, his comrades, that I feel this story is only begun. Yet I trust the reader will catch a glimpse of the man's stature, his manifold capacities as artist and crusader, and of the movement which he helped to found and which moulded him as much, and more (he would have insisted), than he moulded it.

I am deeply indebted to his widow Lydia, poet and artist herself, upon whose time and memory I drew for so much of his life. Much of the material for this book comes from Bob's writings and drawings through his many years on the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* the New York *World,* the New York *Call, The Masses, The Liberator, The Daily Worker, The Communist* and *Political Affairs.* His early years as a child in frontier Texas I got from Bob's own rich notes for his autobiography. Had he been spared to complete what he had only begun I am sure it would have equalled the best of autobiographies in our language. It would have stood with that of his old friend Lincoln Steffens, with such classics as *The Education of Henry Adams.* But that was not to be, for reasons you will find farther along.

His autobiographic notes, unfortunately, do not go beyond his early years and then, skipping a decade, his recollections of the renowned Mooney case. That was about all.

Fortunately I knew him for more than twenty years as friend, neighbor, colleague and teacher. I observed his work as a leader during the terrible crisis of the early thirties and throughout the Scottsboro case. I was with him in Spain for more than a year during the war there. An age was embodied, I knew, in his life.

I wish to thank all his friends and comrades who spoke to me of him, like William Z. Foster, Alexander Trachtenberg,

James W. Ford, Steve Nelson, William L. Patterson, Fred Ellis, Abner Berry, James S. Allen, Hugo Gellert, Michael Gold. But mostly I wrote this book for my children who loved him, and to whom Bob was as their grandfather; and for the many other children like them whom he loved and for whom he fought. As they come into manhood and into womanhood, they will want to know what manner of man this big, laughing, tender, booming friend was who told them such wonderful stories.

I had wanted to talk about him with others who fought at his side throughout the years, his political associates, like Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Eugene Dennis, Benjamin Davis and their comrades. But I had not the opportunity. They were in prison while this book was written, jailed solely for holding the ideas he lived by. To help to free them he put aside the writing of his own story, as you will see. For more important than his own life, he always felt, was the freedom, the life, of others.

J. N.

Croton-on-Hudson, November 7, 1955.

Child of Texas

TEXAS ROLLED east, west, north, south, endlessly, in a territory that could hold half of Europe. It was a Babel of many tongues the year Robert Minor was born in San Antonio, July 15, 1884, in an unpainted frontier cottage a few paces from the old dun-colored mission fort of the Alamo.

In this nineteenth year after the Civil War a third of all Texans spoke the Spanish of their forebears and were chiefly of Indian blood. About a fourth more were counted of African stock and had been slaves. One in twenty spoke the guttural English of the German-born settlers—the *Acht-und-Vierziger,* the Forty-eighters, families of the Teutonic refugees who had fought on the barricades in the German revolution of 1848. Anglo-Saxon immigrants from the Atlantic Seaboard, north and south, came down earlier in the wagon trains, men like Sam Houston and Sam Maverick, restless men and hardy women, bold, tough, resourceful folk.

In 1884 San Antonio, which Robert Minor recalled as the most beautiful city in the world, was a scraggly cattle town of wood and clay. Jaunty horsemen galloped down the main street whooping in the unleashed exuberance of the back country cowboys visiting town, picturesque fellows in their embroidered chaps and handsome sombreros, tall men, most of them, as though the size of the state bred men to fit.

Bob Minor's home town was founded by Spanish monks who accompanied the Conquistadores bearing swords shaped like the Cross. Indians sweated under the stern direction of the cowled Spanish priests and built the mission to honor Saint Anthony, San Antonio de Bexar. The original village sprawled around the adobe church called the Mission of the Cottonwood Tree, in Spanish, the Alamo.

The Republic of Texas joined the United States in 1846. Fourteen years later, in 1860, old General Sam Houston—a relative of Bob's mother, Routez Houston—was forcibly deposed from the governorship by an armed minority of slaveholders who severed Texas from the Union and made it part of the slave South.

The old general who had been the first President of the Texas Republic was a man of many lives. He had lived with the Indians in his early youth, spoke their language, and he had become the friend of Old Hickory—Andrew Jackson.

Old Sam came often to visit Bob's grandfather at his stone farmhouse. Routez told her son how the two men sat together on the black polished horse-block under the cloudless sky. General Houston, she remembered, always wore an Indian blanket for the evening chill and the two talked long and earnestly about something she could not, at her age then, understand. They may well have been conspiring against the betrayers of their beloved state. The crusty general had never in his heyday displayed any love for the arrogant swells rising to power as slaveowners, and the Bourbons, who have long memories, never forgot that. To the Confederate generation and their immediate descendants the name of Sam Houston was taboo. A relative once warned young Bob never to mention his blood relationship with the old general.

So it is a question whether the family spoke warmly of old Sam as they sat under the overhanging lamp that flickered in their bare parlor. Yet the folk of the South who hark from the gentry never tired of ancestry and there was enough to talk about: Mildred Washington, for instance, the aunt of George Washington, flowered brightly on the ancestral tree of the Minors. And certainly they talked of the uncles and aunts, the grandfathers and grandmothers of the Tidewater in the Old Dominion State. And what about General John Minor who was the campaign manager for Thomas Jefferson when Monticello's sage ran for the presidency? They must have speculated in their pin-clean parlor about André Martieu, who shipped from La Rochelle on the Atlantic Coast of France to Jamestown in Virginia in the early 1600's, to oversee the construction of breastworks around the wooden settlement during the Indian wars, another ancestor. And it could well have been that old Robert Minor, Bob's father, noted proudly that the

fortifications that later were built around Yorktown were still stout when King George's Cornwallis signed the protocol that ended the war of the Revolution.

Certainly there was talk of Indians for the emigrants had ridden through wilderness and across prairies, fording the rivers in their wagon trains and there was natural anxiety over the Red Man's frame of mind as they headed into his hunting grounds. The old folks had, at least at first, all the guilty animosities and uneasy prejudices against the original inhabitants of this continent: one of Bob's earliest memories was the jubilance with which an elder took him by the hand to gawk at a newly-captured Indian chief. Bob remembered a grave, handsome old warrior in feathered headdress, wearing a bright red and black blanket over his spare straight shoulders. Yes, there was much talk of Indians for old Aunt Mary Maverick told young Bob stories he never forgot to his dying day. Mary he remembered as a tall, thin, straight old woman with a proud, weatherbeaten face, the widow of the first Sam Maverick who signed the Declaration of Independence of the Texan Republic.

Routez, young Bob's mother, had a treasure bag of such stories which she doled out to her child, her favorite, and I suspect that she gave the tales a turn that was strange in these parts, for she accented the white man's injustice to the Indians: she was reared by her father, a freethinker, as they called them in those days, an agnostic, old Jeffersonian country doctor, Dr. Gray Jones Houston. He taught her a skepticism toward religion, though she lived by its ethical precepts.

Dr. Houston came from New Rochelle, New York. He had studied medicine at New York's City College and joined a wagon train as its doctor, settling in Texas. He brought with him Elizabeth Maverick Weyman, a lively sixteen year old bride whose father nicknamed her Routez, after a hoydenish character in an old French novel that had caught his New World fancy. Their daughter, Bob's mother, got her mother's nickname as her real, given name.

Bob recalled Routez's quiet but firm undercurrent of opposition to her husband's religiosity. Old Robert believed his children should receive spiritual instruction in the Episcopal Church to which he belonged but when he broached the subject, the mother looked absently out the window at the mesquite-covered plains. "If the children want to go to church," she replied

finally, "I shall wash and iron their clothes and let them go. But I shall not send them."

When Bob came of an age to think about God and His ways, his father walked him down the long dusty highway outside their home and spoke of a Moving Intelligence who must have created the world and all its abundance. "If you walk down the road and find a watch," the old Virginian told the child as they stared at the vast plain and the starry sky, "you would know that it could not have sprung from the earth of itself. It had to be made and so it is with Man that is so much more than a watch." The child listened gravely but was silent, thinking of Routez. Later he said he thought his father had gone only half-way down the line: he did not explain who made the Maker. The child grew to boyhood minus the piety that was customary in pioneer households. Early, as you see, Routez taught him to question, to inquire, to reject ideas merely because the generality of men, including his father, held those ideas.

Yet the father, a tall man with a shock of black hair, as tall as Bob who came to reach two inches over six feet, respected his wife's sturdy independence of mind. Bob recalled a father and mother who never lost their regard for one another; love lasted until death. She had married him for better or for worse and she stayed at his side through all the years of adversity, making the best of a hard life when often there was little or nothing to eat. Bob remembered surprising his mother in the scrubby field near the little home, munching the prickly pears which no respectable Texan ate unless he was on the verge of starvation. Though she had come from a middle class family that was never in want of food, she rarely railed at her husband, a dreamy improvident man who proved to be a most trying breadwinner in a time when many grew rich—as others grew poor, or poorer.

Childhood

YES, FOR many it was a time of stagnation in the land even as some moved haughtily from countryside to counting-house in this day of the Robber Barons. Old Bob was not unaware of the weeds that were beginning to grow in many New England towns while other villages were rising in clapboard profusion in the west and southwest. Many old farmsteads were falling in ruins as the sturdy Yankee yeomen were tramping to the cities and here in the vast southwest smaller cattle-raisers were being swallowed up by bigger ones like small fish in the distant sea by greater fish. Even cowpunchers around their bonfires in the prairies under the arch of the western sky knew the names of Jim Gould and Jim Fisk and Andy Carnegie and they talked of that new marvel, natural gas and the flaming towers whence fire issued day and night, fed by John D. Rockefeller's black petroleum boiling up from the earth's bowels. Ordinary men were becoming extraordinary millionaires and big square red-brick mansions were rising in the trading towns even as the log huts built by big hard hands were falling in. Yes, ordinary men, the most of America, who lathed and ploughed and kept crossroads stores were going bankrupt; talk of cheap money and the turbulent creed of Populism rose and fell around the smoky lamps. The name of Henry George and his Single Tax gospel out of New York on the Hudson was heard across the country. It was tempestuous talk in the cow-towns of old Robert Minor's country.

There is ample evidence that the father talked of panaceas, musing deeply on the new times for he was a thinking man. True, there was in him a remote bookishness, a lingering (his affluent kinsmen on the big ranches called it a malingering) among the principles of the past, before commerce and industry became the new golden gods of the frontier. Much, perhaps too much was in him of Tacitus, Lucretius and Plutarch, of Ecclesiastes and Shakespeare, Gibbon and Washington Irving,

the masters of old William and Mary, the university Thomas Jefferson had founded, old Robert's idol who had dreamed quixotically of a nation of sturdy farmers on family homesteads who would cut and till the soil for their bread and emerge, like ancient Cincinnatus, from the wilderness when their country needed them.

Old Robert Minor, a scion of aristocrats who owned slaves in Virginia, younger brother of two stalwarts of the Old Dominion who had fought for the Confederacy, related by blood to the oldest families of the land, nursed his own thoughts as an adopted Texan in this country where only yesterday they had suspiciously asked newcomers, "What was your name back in the states?" The laurels of ancestry mattered, but not overly, in this restless territory: what counted was your facility to accumulate greenbacks in those new, imposing, red-brick buildings that stood on the main streets of the cowtowns.

He had tacked his shingle onto the door of the little dark office with the squares of newspapers over the broken panes, the dust-laden shelves of Blackstone which young Bob remembered, but the clients were scarce and those that did come for litigation quarreled over the petty sums of the poor, a stolen cow, a broken contract over a patch of parched earth or a shaky wooden property. Robert Minor, Esq., drove a little shay that his bony nag Napoleon hauled into San Antonio to his office every morning. He bowed in courtly dignity to the storekeeper, the stagecoach driver, the pot-bellied sheriff, and then plunged into the golden world of his treasured books, listening, perhaps too patiently, for the footsteps of non-existent clients to come up the creaky stairway.

Too patiently indeed. At home little Routez, hard put to keep the family in gingham and bread, had reason to be impatient. Five children had come, one quickly after the other, one had died. Poverty varies little whether the sky above you is the serene blue of the plains or the somber heaven of the tenement city.

Bob was five years old, his brother, Houston, seven, and his sister Elizabeth, two, when he discovered tragedy was impending. He noted, uneasily, long earnest conversations beyond earshot, between Robert and Routez—and ears cocked, he discovered it concerned their home. Routez seemed to want old Robert to do something he did not want to do. Then one day his

mother sadly dressed Bob to go somewhere. Strange men came and carried the bureau dresser onto the front sidewalk, took the beds apart and roughly piled them on the sidewalk. A big wagon rolled up and the men heaped the furniture high on it, so high he thought everything would fall off. A Negro driver climbed onto the seat, Bob's big brother got beside him, and Routez helped Bob up to the high seat. Bob inquired where they were going but nobody answered.

They drove a long way, across two little rivers and many places he had never seen, until they came to a bleak brown little three-room cottage that stood high on cedar posts on the highest part of a little hill, two miles from the heart of San Antonio. Surrounded by mesquite brush and cactus, it was another name for failure.

Robert Minor, Sr., went on, serenely, at least to all outward appearance, unruffled, tramping now, with his long-legged stride to his office every morning, and Routez stifled her abrasive indignation at the descent in their fortunes. Poverty was not fated by the stars but by some obstinate adherence to vague ideals which her prosperous brothers would never understand and which her practical nature could understand but not accept.

She had talked herself out with her obdurate husband and her harassed attention fell upon the little reedy son with the sage brown eyes who observed everything. Bustling about the new kitchen she blew off steam as the youngster sat watching, listening with the gravity of the thoughtful child. His father was wrong to surrender the house to the building-and-loan company, she sputtered. Hadn't he already paid as much as the whole cost of building the house, but the interest had kept mounting and had made him owe just as much as ever though they had truly paid for the house. Completely. Right was right, she snapped; this was wrong. She told the child that she had tried to persuade his father to take advantage of a new law that was passed against usury but old Robert—quixotic lawyer that he was—felt that the contract he signed prior to the law, was sacrosanct, held him honor-bound. "He should have listened to me," she sighed. "I told him that his children have rights more than any building-and-loan company." The connotations of this sentence sank into the mind of the child (lasted for more than sixty years, contained in it the logic that brought him in later life to the stand he took to his dying day).

Routez was cold for weeks to old Robert but the child could not share her grief. His heart reveled in the endless rolling prairie about the little brown house; the beautiful green mesquite bush four to ten feet high delighted him, the great and small clusters of cactus with fierce red thorns through which long-legged jackrabbits scurried and little cottontails, innocent green lizards, evil-looking brown lizards, lovely horned toads.

Inside the home's three rooms, on every wall, Routez hung a beautiful painting that inspired the sensitive child with the keen eye. The best was a painting of a handsome, sad-eyed man with long black hair and a black beard who wore a flaming red shirt.

One day, when Bob was seven, he asked Routez about the paintings. She halted in the round of her kitchen duties, stared out the window at the mesquite, and told him stories of the canvasses that held so much of her childhood beneath the cracked varnish.

A wandering German painter by the name of Otto Schultz had knocked on the farm door just after the Civil War and persuaded her father to let him teach little Routez art. The lessons were the delight of her life. The German had come from New Orleans where he had painted a portrait, as young Bob saw it, of a pirate about to be executed. The pirate was the gentle-eyed man in a red shirt and who wore a big black beard. Routez told Bob he was not really a pirate, but an honest merchant sea captain. Mr. Schultz had told her that. He had the portrait with him and he taught Routez to draw an exact copy. The German stayed until the country doctor's daughter copied all his paintings. These hung on the walls now. Routez walked through the rooms, Bob at her side, as she explained each in great and loving detail.

The German told her father, one day, that his girl had learned as much as he could teach her by copying. The old doctor asked what other method was there of learning to paint and the German said, "From life."

"What does that mean?" the doctor asked.

"That means," the artist said looking intently at the frosty old doctor, "painting models with their clothes off."

The doctor stared back at the German. "You mean," he snorted, "that young ladies study art that way?" The snort concluded Routez's artistic education.

Young Bob studied the picture of the man with the beard: no, he could only have been a pirate. And gazing at it, one day, he thought how beautiful it is to make pictures. Then it occurred to him that drawing, painting, must be women's work, no men he knew painted. And women's work could not be for a son of Texas.

And yet something tugged at him, compelled him to sit down and draw: Indian battles, at first, about which he had heard so much, with much shooting of pistols in which every bullet was portrayed by the dot of a well-licked pencil. He drew on wrapping paper and on the margins of newspapers, the only paper available for him until his mother, suddenly suspecting one day that her son showed talent, began to supply him with small writing pads.

Routez had little time to dwell on her childhood. There was more than enough to do to feed the little mouths, clothe her children and teach them the three R's, for the schools were distant, too far for her young.

She had much to consider, a station in life for her young so that they would not grow up to become day-laborers and earn their living by the sweat of their brows. It is hard to say how deeply the doctor's proud daughter felt their poverty but there is no doubt that she had no desire to be shunted, a pariah, out of the community into which she was born, the little clique of professionals, the small business folk, ranchers like her rich brothers, her kin among the Mavericks and the Houstons, solid citizens indeed. But pariahs they became for after they moved into the little brown house few came to visit.

When her little girl died, the ladies of St. Mark's Episcopal Church where Robert Minor had registered his family decided they must visit and pay their respects to this woman who came rarely to services. They stood, starched and somber at the foot of the bedstead and murmured their sympathies until a tall, angular lady stepped forward and the others turned silent. Little Bob, lingering in the hall outside the bedroom, listened. "Mrs. Minor," the tall woman said coldly, "we are grieving with you in your trouble and we have come to perform a Christian duty. We must tell you why your two children were taken. It is because of your own sin. You did not worship God in church."

The bereaved woman beneath the counterpane, wan from the travail of childbirth must have felt the blood come to her cheeks

for she replied, "Preachers say that all men are born in sin, but I know that is not true because my children are not born in sin." The tall woman turned on her heel, her mouth a thin line of disapproval. She stalked from the room, the others following her in single file. Bob heard and though he did not understand it all he knew something had happened which did not bring his mother joy and he did not forget.

Later old Robert said stubbornly that honest and respectable people should go to church. Bob noticed Routez' silence. The following day she told him it wasn't true because her father was a good man and he always told her that churches were no different from any other kind of houses except that they had steeples and bells on them and preachers were no better than anybody else.

Under Routez' eager instruction Bob learned to read, early, and one day old Robert sternly handed him a slim prayer book. "You are old enough now to answer for yourself," he said. "Take the catechism and learn it so you can be confirmed." The boy glanced questioningly at his mother who remained silent. Bob, however, liked to learn pieces by heart, which he could readily do. Several weeks passed and his father eyed him at supper one night and asked about the catechism. "I already know it," Bob replied. "Already?" the father asked, pleased. "Let's hear you repeat it." The child rolled out the sentences in a monotone. "That's fine," his father said, elated. "You've got the words perfectly. But you have to say it in a more reverent way, show that it is a very serious thing you are saying and show that you believe it with all your heart." Bob was silent a moment and then he answered: "I said it right."

"You didn't say it as though you believed it."

"I don't believe it," the boy replied.

"Don't believe it?" his father cried. "But you must believe it!" Routez, hovering around the table throughout the performance, intervened: "Be glad he's truthful, Robert, and everything will be all right."

It was one of the first of many religious arguments young Bob heard and engaged in, for religious sects were bewilderingly many. Scriptural argument was a sort of relief to the strain of hard times. The word "argue" was commonly pronounced "ogger" and Texans would ogger on the slightest pretext. Enter Gabe Smith, aged ten, the son of a nearby lay preacher, a man

desperately poor who lived by odd jobs of rough carpentering, and whose wife had two cows whose milk she hawked for five cents a pail. The Smith family seemed interested in religion alone in this day when Moody and Sankey's revivals swept the country. Gabe came into the house toting a pail of milk and stopped Bob to ask, "Do you believe in total immersion?" Bob, then eight, a freethinker's grandson, promptly replied, "No."

"Then git a chair and let's ogger," Gabe said ominously to the boy who was destined for a life in which he oggered with millions.

Routez felt the covert displeasure of her well-to-do family over her improvident household, her impiety, and her impractical husband, but there is no doubt that the frontier family's ties still held, though they were strained; the amenities of the clan were strictly observed, at least on state occasions. The Minors came punctually to the annual Maverick dinner, dressed in Sunday clothes, the children scrubbed from head to foot, driving up in the buggy to Sam Maverick's big house. The dinners were a custom begun a long time before, in the days of the first Sam Maverick and the Texas Republic.

The little ones sat breathless among dozens of boisterous grown-ups at a long table in a big room lit by many candles. On the middle of the table lay a roast pig, cooked brown and steaming, almost alive, his mouth open and a lemon between his teeth. Besides there were turkeys. At the head of the table sat Sam Maverick, the second Sam, about whom Bob had heard many stories. He was now called Old Sam. He sat sharpening his big carving knife on a steel, smiling, his big white teeth shone through a long dark beard, the self-satisfied chief of the clan. All laughed loudly at his bright remarks. The room smelled good and it seemed to Bob that he was eating the very best dinner of his life.

In the middle of the feast Old Sam glanced across the table at the head of the Minor household and said, "Anybody can get rich," and then as all were ready to roar in laughter, he added, "if he tries." It seemed like a sagacious comment to young Bob but he glanced at his mother, her face suddenly red, angry, her eyes flashing. As they drove home in the old phaeton she said sternly, at the front gate, "Sam had no right to say that. He

said it on purpose because we were there and it is not true." And after a while she bitterly quoted a Texas saw, "Them as has, gits."

So there was much talk at night under the lamp, of poverty and of wealth, of panaceas that would remedy the plight of a people where some were millionaires and others were hungry. Old Robert came to think hard on these questions, as he sat in the little parlor, the shrine to all that was intellectual. On the center table that stood between a bed and the sheet-iron stove lay the Holy Bible and the family album, alongside of which stood a well-thumbed copy of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty,* and Ignatius Donnelly's *Caesar's Column,* Henry Demarest Lloyd's *Wealth Against Commonwealth* and to which were added a few years later "Coin" Harvey's free silver tract. Young Bob scanned through Donnelly's *Caesar's Column,* its salient passages heavily underscored, forming the subjects of many heated arguments Old Bob had with friends on the front porch.

It was a land and a time of heated argument: in the backwoods and in the small towns, on the porches under the soft southern skies and on the sidewalks, everybody was oggering.

Watching, Remembering

MENTION ANYTHING, the Civil War, the Negro, the gold standard, free silver, the President, and the men and women on the porch of an evening, or the men in the garish saloon, or loquacious lawyers in the courthouse corridors would have a go at each other like knights with lances. And so their young.

In the fall of 1894 the first schoolhouse within traveling distance of the Minor home was finished. Young Bob had his first opportunity to sit behind the oaken doors and listen to the young schoolmarm whose hair was piled high in the fashion of the day.

Yes, the young were true children of their parents. Convention required a fight between two boys every recess hour and the newcomer, nothing loathe, was usually pushed into one combat a day. He was a gangly boy, a big ten, with an odd quizzical air, but he had a way with his fists as the older boys soon discovered.

Routez taught him sufficient grammar and arithmetic to enter the third grade and he skipped to the fourth in mid-term. Learning came easy to this lad the others nicknamed "Hungry," in honor of his prodigious appetite which devoured Routez' great sandwiches that he carried in a man's lunch kit. His was a tenacious memory, he had a quick grasp, a taste for books, book-learning and a talent for disputation which his tongue, as well as his fists, could manage. The improvident lawyer's son remained in school only four years, but long enough to learn that the Civil War was really a war between brother states that need never have happened were it not for the Yankee's aggressive nature. The brave, trusting sons of Jefferson Davis won all the chief battles until the very last few and the Yankees had cheated them of merited victory. And Reconstruction was a time of terror. Did not the Scriptures decree, since the time of Ham, that the dark man was inferior to the white? Now

the hewer of wood and the drawer of water challenged his betters, a dangerous state of affairs, which the North had brought on. The spurious ideas of race supremacy were drilled into the children's heads along with their ABC's and Bob was a child of the South. Yet, to the thoughtful child, the son of Routez, something was amiss, something he could not put into words, of course, but which lingered secretly in his memory for a later time to resolve. Not everything jibed. The boy, good at figures, could not, somehow, total up his impressions and his teachings to reach a logical sum in his ethics.

And there was Mrs. Body.

When the fifth baby came, a boy named Joe Houston Minor, frail Routez could no longer do the housework. By now the dreamy lawyer had established a local reputation as a man of probity: the poor could trust him, for he did not catch his delinquent clients by the throat, and they learned to come to him in numbers enough, and small payments enough, for things to look up, a little, not much. He announced grandly one day that he was about to hire a colored woman to work part-time. It led to an acquaintance with a woman Bob never forgot. She was tall, slender, graceful and carried herself with stern dignity. Her name was Molly Body and she was very dark.

Bob noted that Molly's husband, a large, heavy man, obviously in poor health, escorted her to work every morning and the youngster detected a singular gallantry of the man toward his wife. Every evening he called to escort her home: the affection between the two was evident. Molly constantly referred to her husband as *Mr.* Body.

One day Bob heard his mother say:

"Molly, what is your husband's first name?"

"His name is *Mr.* Body."

"What is his *first* name?" Routez repeated and Molly answered: "It is *Mr.* Body, Mrs. Minor."

"Yes, Molly, but I mean his first name, what do you call him at home?"

"I always call him Mr. Body, Mrs. Minor."

"But everybody has a first name, haven't they? What is his?"

"I don't know as I ever heard anybody call him anything but *Mr.* Body, Mrs. Minor," the Negro woman replied, her voice turning hard, mechanical. Bob glanced at her, facing his mother with eyes as sharp as flint as she said, doggedly, once again:

"Everybody calls him *Mr.* Body, Mrs. Minor."

Routez turned away, divining, evidently, the desperate implication that she, like all others, must accord the black man the title of equality. Certainly the boy caught it in this little kitchen drama. Later that afternoon Bob heard the front gate creak open and Mr. Body entered, slowly, walking heavily as though he were very tired. Routez called to Bob: "Hitch the horse to the buggy and take Molly and Mr. Body home." Molly sat in the rear of the buggy and directed the boy on the road as he drove over a muddy trail through the Mexican settlement to a tumbledown shack among several where the Negroes lived. This was the Bodys' home. Aside from once advising the white boy of the right road, Mr. Body avoided all speech with him.

After Routez recovered, Mrs. Body no longer came. Although a Negro house servant's wages were no more than $2.50 or $3.00 a week, the Minors could not afford the service. Later the arrangement began again on a half-time basis and Molly came at noon. One day she found an empty plate, a knife and fork, and a coffee cup on the rear-porch floor and she called Bob, asking, "What is that? Have you been feeding someone on the back steps?"

"Yes."

"Who was it?"

"A hobo."

"Was he white or colored?"

"White."

"Would you let a man eat dinner on the back steps?" she asked sternly. Bob replied, uncomfortably, "I didn't know what he might do if I let him in the house and he saw there was nobody home but a boy my size." And Molly said, "I'll see to it that none of my color will eat on the back steps as long as I am here."

The episode lingered in his mind, his boy's feelings stirred strangely. The southern mores would not regard kindly this display of independence, but this was Routez' son and though he could not assess it rightly, it tugged at him somehow. He noted, too, his mother's regard for Mrs. Body and his own was enhanced by the Negro woman's firm dignity and her unmistakable demand for respect.

Yet counterposed to all this was the overwhelming weight of the community's mores. It was brutal toward the Negro and

to a lesser degree, the Mexican. One day as Bob walked the dusty streets of San Antonio on an errand he heard cries on the public square in front of the ancient Spanish fort, the Alamo, and a shouting crowd ran past. The boy joined the crowd, running, and learned from a panting man with dilated nostrils that they were pursuing a Negro whom they were going to lynch as soon as they "catched" him. The Negro had struck a deputy, the man said, and he had to be lynched. The boy halted in his tracks, and walked home, thoughtfully, suddenly fearful. Four years later, sixteen now, a carpenter's apprentice, he stood, manlike, in a saloon drinking beer when a stranger approached and began to talk. The man took something out of his pocket and showed it to Bob. It was the severed thumb of a Negro, souvenir of a lynching in which the man had participated and about which he was now boasting. The sight of the thumb shocked Bob, compelled him to think, but the times were such that thoughts of this sort went unmentioned. You kept them to yourself. Meanwhile you conformed; you avoided the company of Negroes and if you did not jeer at them you remained silent when others did. And he remembered the warning never to mention his blood relationship to old Sam Houston.

The child was rapidly growing into a man-cub, big, brawny, all legs, on fire to help Routez as a bread-winner for the family. His first job was as messenger boy for the Western Union Telegraph Company, skimming through town on a red bicycle. There was a swelling pride when he brought his pay envelope home to Routez whose pert frame, he noticed, sagged these days with the many duties of the household.

He undertook certain household chores to help his mother, which included washing the babies' diapers. And, as he stood under the hot Texas sun over a washboard, it seemed to him that this was the most humiliating duty man had ever undertaken since the beginning of time. About this time he ran across a copy of Dickens' *Child's History of England.* It entranced him and he finished it in two nights. In it he discovered a reference to Lord Berkeley, "chief diaperer to the Prince of Wales." He was horrified: his own middle name was Berkeley. Was he named after a dirty parasite of a man who diapered a king's baby? Never would he use that name again! He stuck to his resolve the rest of his life.

Yet, though his household chores were onerous, he continued them, characteristically, until his mother relieved him.

He had come to an age when no body should be assigned such duties.

Observant Routez understood this boy of hers, turned her back when, after washing the diapers, he would sneak the family horse out, saddle him and gallop into the prairie. Bob had learned to ride so young that he could not remember when he first got on a horse. He would join several other boys and canter out to the Fredericksburg Road to meet the herds of cattle coming into the stockyards. The weary, thirsty cowboys tolerated two or three boys who would drive the cattle while the men took turns galloping ahead to Beidiger's saloon to snatch a drink.

Nor did Routez speak up when she saw young Bob take the horse out in those rare times of Texas when the sky became leaden, and lightning zig-zagged through the skies to the accompaniment of violent prairie thunder. Bob rode wildly through the torrents like a Valkyrie of the plains. She knew he had, somehow, a wild, unbridled strain, her boy who would silently wash diapers for love of her and then go tearing across the prairies like a young thunder god. She coddled his violent independence.

The fourteen-year-old boy in the blue Western Union messenger uniform that was short at the sleeves and the ankles whiled the long hours away in the shabby office, between calls, sketching briskly on the long yellow sheets. What he saw during the day flowed out of his long fingers, through a pencil onto paper. The operators were irritated that he used up so much of their stock until they saw what he drew. Then, surprised, they would stare at him. "Say," a young blade with the carefully plastered hair of the time, the office's telegraph operator, said: "Kid, you're an artist. That's a spittin' image of old man Cadwalader." The boy, embarrassed, but pleased in the way of the artist, was silent, yet fearful a bit that his talent would be regarded as some sort of effeminacy, for drawing was woman's work according to the code of the frontier.

One day he leaned his bicycle against the wooden building of A. H. Cadwalader and Son, the sign maker who entranced him by painting a big shield-shaped emblem which depicted a red rowboat on a blue sea in which seamen, in yellow slickers and oilskin hats bent over their oars rowing against storm and lightning. Inside the workshop that once was a stable, bearded men worked on similar signs and the messenger boy stood transfixed, forgetting bicycle and telegram as he watched men daubing away

silently, turning now and then to spit a stream of tobacco juice into nearby spittoons. A wild exultation passed through him: painting was not a woman's work, not when it was done on wood, when it was done by sign painters, and drawing a deep breath, he entered and asked for Mr. Cadwalader, a tall, gaunt man with long hands and a keen eye. The youngster asked bashfully if he needed an apprentice. "Why?" the old man drawled and the boy hastily drew a sheaf of drawings on Western Union paper from his pocket and thrust them toward the man. Cadwalader looked at the drawings and then, like the telegraph operator, at the boy. He steered Bob into the workshop where he said to a short stocky man in a bristling brown beard, "This kid's got talent, Elmer. He's working for A. H. Cadwalader now."

The bearded man looked at the drawings, whistled, and straightway began to teach the youngster his craft. "Art," he said to Bob as he spit a stream of tobacco juice toward a spittoon, "is born in you; a teacher can only help bring it out." It was the age-old admiration of artist for artist, that curious admiration, sometimes begrudged, that one man of talent recognizes in another. Brown-beard taught him to letter by drawing on the lines of the floor of big, pine boards and here Bob learned the great Roman letters that became a characteristic of his handwriting. The youngster was in seventh heaven until he realized that his wages were fifty cents a day, reduced later to twenty-five cents because times were hard and business slack. After four months of bliss he reluctantly relinquished the job because affairs at home had again become unhappy: the lawyer's clients had little or nothing to pay these days.

If Routez was pleased by her son's bent toward art, the father indisputably was not. Where can you get with a paint brush, he asked, and he urged his son to learn the lawyer's profession. Bob resisted Blackstone by a flank attack. He found work in the local office of the I. & G. N. Railroad, and studied shorthand to hold the job. But he disliked work among the aspiring railway magnates and soon forsook them for a job as a clerk in the office of a small machine shop. Wages, $25 a month.

After a few days a shortage developed in the shop itself and Bob persuaded his boss to switch him to manual labor. He forgot the office and had a fine time repairing guns, hard work but he liked it.

He was a big sixteen now, over six feet, as big now as he was

ever to be and he walked with the long stride of the plainsman, cocky, confident. He was growing up with a rush that brought pangs to Routez' stout heart. She knew he was aching to take his place with those who were men. And when, as times grew slack as so often they did, and men as well as boys were laid off and the affairs of the Minor household needed repair, he would be proposing soon to leave home and seek work. That she knew.

There was talk at nights of work building the railroads that were beginning to criss-cross the state, reaching out in one thin shining line after another to the Pacific. Bob spoke, guardedly at first, of finding such work. And now Routez knew he would soon be off, a young Lochinvar of the mesquite, heart and mind agog, wide open as the endless plains, certain of his ways and his strength.

He could ride a horse as good as the best, could fire a gun at a tomato can fifty paces off and it would leap into the air nine times out of ten; he could wrestle and box. He had enough canniness, experience to suspect that everything glittering was not gold and a sufficiency of caution, skepticism, awareness, all that goes by the name of savvy, to stay among the quick and not the dead.

And one day Bob was off. He found work as a farmhand on a big ranch seventy miles out of town which was owned by a big, bearded farmer everybody called Uncle Daniel.

He took to the ancient chores: seeding, plowing and hoeing, was up before the early Texas dawn and in bed shortly after the sudden dusk, and he relished the work. Here, as in the city, he kept his sharp brown eyes open, observing, noting, remembering. The code of the farmside was simple: obeisance to the word of the Good Book, more so here than in the cow town, but there was, too, the same generous latitude in translating the good word into the day's deed. There was Wilbur.

Bob never forgot Wilbur. He had everything that would appeal to a young citizen of the Lone Star State. Wilbur came galloping up on a fine bay horse, bareback, bridleless, the noserope lightly in one hand. He bounced off the horse which stopped suddenly, on its haunches, and landed lightly on his feet, swung onto the porch with his hand extended. This day the Baptist minister stood outside visiting Uncle Daniel as so often he did, and Wilbur slid his hand into the preacher's, standing there with a big boyish grin.

Wilbur wore overalls and a jumper and as he landed off the horse his jumper flew up enough for young Bob to see a beautiful big Colt and a .45 six-shooter fastened to the apron of his overalls. That was the mode in the back country, all followed it with the faithfulness of ritual—the gun stuck into the front of the overalls, five of the six cylinders loaded, the sixth empty. The trick was to let the big hammer and firing pin down onto the blue denim cloth of the breast apron with the empty cylinder under the firing pin.

Everyone hailed Wilbur delightedly. He was a romantic figure, loveable, one of the very best bronco busters and by all means the best pistol shot in the county. The Baptist minister grinned through his beard as he shook Wilbur's hand, saying, "Howdy, Wilbur." Uncle Daniel asked Bob to pick a good big watermelon from a shady spot under a bush in the field. The boy chose a melon of a suitable size for the nine on the porch and returned with it underarm. Uncle Daniel dismayed him when he cut the melon into eight pieces and distributed them to all but the youngster. Bob sat in a corner, nursing his damaged pride and pretending unconcern though he was dying to hear the precious words of his hero, Wilbur, who brought news of the big outside world.

"All the farm boys is being drawed away to the railroad," Wilbur began.

"This railroad is going to ruin the country," the preacher replied. "There won't be no cotton picked."

"They're paying $1.50 a day to men working on the grade," the cowpuncher continued, "and they are hiring mule teams along with the men that has them and they are paying good." After these observations on the state of the nation the party began to tease Wilbur about some incident that apparently had been the topic of conversation while Bob was in the melon patch.

"Have you had a drink with the sheriff lately, Wilbur?" Uncle Daniel asked amid a gale of laughter.

"Say, Wilbur," the preacher added, "if you're going to be buying anything in the hardware store at Brownwood will you just get me a good pocketknife; I'm needing one." Wild laughter again and Uncle Daniel said: "You needn't give him no money; he won't need none."

It was all mysterious to Bob but after a while, noticing that

Wilbur had glanced curiously at him, Bob asked the cowboy, hesitantly, if he would take a little walk down to the cotton field, which they did. Bob then asked, looking about first, where the end of the new railroad construction line was and how do you get there. The cowpuncher obliged, his eyes twinkling, but he offered no advice. The nearest camp was twenty miles off.

Bob remarked that that was a mighty nice gun Wilbur had. The cowpuncher took it out and said grandly, "Try a shot, Bob." Savoring the gun in his hand, Bob then fired two shots into a tree, delighted with the gun's precision and its hard, tingling kick. There was never anything like the Colt .45. Nothing in the world balances so well, no handle fits your hand so natural. "If you would like to have it, I'll sell it to you for $7," Wilbur said lightly as he reloaded the two empty cylinders.

While Wilbur waited in the cotton field Bob went to the barn, climbed to the hayloft where he made his bed, and counted out seven dollars of his hoard that he husbanded jealously. He brought the money to Wilbur. Before the cowboy handed Bob his gun Wilbur said: "Bob, promise you won't show this gun to nobody nor tell anybody that you got it from me till I get home and get another." Bob promised, puzzled, and then asked what it was all about, this stuff about the hardware store and the sheriff and everybody on the porch laughing.

Wilbur grinned: it was nothing, just that he and some other fellows had been up to Brownwood and had busted into the hardware store and took all the fine guns that they could carry on their horses in sacks and got away before anybody noticed them. He kept grinning at the memory, adding that he rode into Brownwood the following Saturday night, to the saloon for a drink. It was kind of funny because everybody in town knew by that time who had got into the hardware store. He was just drinking his whiskey and all of the fellows in there were looking at him when he sensed another man standing at his side ordering a drink. Wilbur looked around and saw it was the sheriff. Wilbur just stood there and went on drinking his drink just the same, only now he drank with his left hand.

He noticed that the sheriff started slightly when he realized who stood at his side, but Wilbur didn't move or nothing. Then the sheriff went out and Wilbur went out and got on his bay and rode away.

This was what the Baptist preacher and Uncle Daniel, the

deacon and the ladies and the farmhands were jollifying about that fine afternoon on a preaching Sunday. It was nothing particularly unusual.

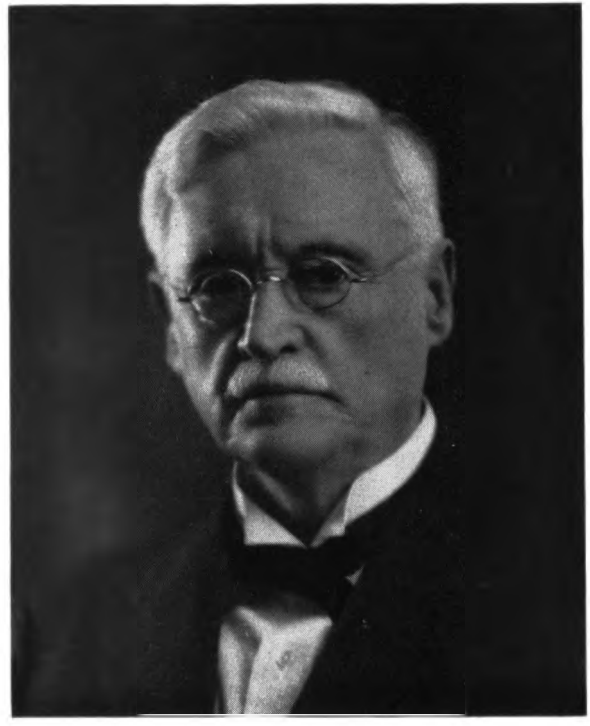
The prestige and popularity of Jesse James and his brother Frank was widespread in the Southwest. The James boys robbed banks and railway express cars and passengers throughout a long career, but they always found a friendly reception in the faraway rural districts of Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas and Texas. It reflected the sharp division of city and country in the early life of our land, the back country population only remotely acquainted with the city which the farmers regarded as the Sodom of robbery and ruin. Anything that injured the city merchant or banker or railroad corporation was permissible if it gained something for one of the rural population. Remember that the old Athenian historian, Thucydides, some 2,500 years back, commented on Greek tillers of the soil who saw no disgrace "being attached" to marauding robber bands, no onus, "but even some glory."

Young Bob that night lay on his pallet of straw remembering how Uncle Daniel had insulted him when he sliced the watermelon eight ways when there were nine on the porch. The ninth was obviously someone who did not make the grade into the privileged circle of adulthood. The boy rose and woke two young farmhands from Georgia and persuaded them to accompany him to the watermelon patch.

Three times they returned, carrying the biggest and ripest watermelons to the hayloft where they feasted on the big fruit, eating the hearts and tossing the rinds and innards as far as they could around the cow lot. In the morning Uncle Daniel's curses woke them. He fired the two Georgia boys. A week later Bob told him he was quitting Monday morning. The old man coldly counted his wages out to the penny, and said: "You are going off to the railroads and sin. The time will come when you will wish you had a home."

The boy silently made a bundle of his shirt, his neatly washed socks and handkerchiefs, all of which he wrapped around his beautiful six shooter. He poured half a pint of machine oil from the cotton gin into each of his knee-high cowhide boots to make them jostle easier on his feet, and clad in undershirt and overalls, he started up the road to the railroad camps.

ROUTEZ HOUSTON MINOR



JUDGE ROBERT BERKELEY MINOR

LYDIA GIBSON MINOR AND ROBERT MINOR, 1929

Working on the Railroad

BOB HAD made about eight of the twenty miles, trudging intently through the mesquite covered plain, his eye on the jackrabbits that leaped out in frenzy and scampered back into the brush as the two-legged animal approached. The dust rose in little spirals behind his long tread and he had little thought for the prey which a day ago would have brought out his trusty Colt. He had to make time. Behind him he heard, suddenly, the soft cluck-cluck of hubs slipping back and forth on the axles of a freight wagon, and he felt the thump of the fast-walking mules. He stepped aside without looking back, so familiar was he with the sound, the welcome back country sound of Texas. As the second pair of the six-mule team came abreast, a voice sang out:

"You a workingman?"

Even before he looked up he had the uncomfortable sense that the voice came from the kind of man they called a crank, there was some tellate tension of the vocal cords, some nasal pitch of excitement that was familiar in this day of Moody's revivals, of those who "oggered" Greenbackism or Byranism or Henry Georgeism. That, too, was familiar in the Texas of 1898. He turned his head to see a big, heavy redfaced Irishman high on the wagon in the driver's seat to the fore of the heap of railroad supplies. The man had great shoulders covered with red hair that stuck out from his undershirt. A workingman? The boy squared his shoulders: "Reckon I am."

"Hop on then and ride to where you're going. 'Tis nobody can ride my wagon 'cepting workingmen."

It was delightful riding on the wide soft cushioned seat and watching the prairie and the fine mules, these remarkable animals that he had seen raised on the big ranches in droves.

"Going to work on the railroad, huh?"

Bob nodded and asked the man if he knew what wages they paid.

"Men on grade-gangs get $1.50 a day and they pay $3.50 a week for their board," the man replied. "They get $5.50 clear a week, side of what they get charged for tobacco and extras. Bridge gang get more—$1.75 a day and pay $4.00 board a week. Men on bridge gangs eat better because the work's harder. They come out a dollar a week more." The old man rambled on, recounting the statistics and lore of the railroad and Bob drank up every word. After a while the Irishman turned silent and when he talked again there was a plaintive edge in his voice: "It gets awful lonesome driving a freighter. Wish I had somebody to ride around with me." He asked Bob his age.

"Sixteen."

"Sixteen's a good age," the man said softly. The Irishman added that thousands of boys like him, boys of the farm, were leaving home and going to work on the railroad. Then his voice took on that quality Bob felt when he first heard it, the high-pitched, restrained excitement as the man said, "Working people's the salt of the earth." The Irishman said he was a workingman all his life, born on the prairie that rolled clear to Mexico and across the desert to Californy and yet he had not a foot of earth for himself, nowhere to lay his head because he was a workingman.

"There's thousands laboring and sweating to build this railroad across the prairie and before the last spike is drove Old Man Huntington will own it all. These men building it now won't get nothing but what to eat and a cot on what to sleep while they're working and when it's all built and the locomotives are running on the rails, they'll have no jobs. And they'll go away again riding the rods or the freight trains wandering thousands of miles, cold and hungry in the winter, hot and hungry in the summer." That was the life of a workingman.

Bob listened, fascinated. The man sure was a crank but he liked his beautiful way of talking and he was glad to hear the Irishman continue. The mule driver said that for every one of the boys going away to work on the railroads there was a girl waiting at home, nice young girls they should be marrying and who would be waiting for them. "But the young fellows never come home again because they will have no money, no nothing." And after a while they too would be getting old, like him,

driving mules for a few years and then they would be thrown aside with nothing to show in their last years for all they had done. The workingman's life. "So you are sixteen?" he asked wistfully.

"Yes."

"Sixteen, well, there's a heap you'll be seeing in your life. You'll be seeing Socialism."

It was a word Bob did not know despite the many arguments he had heard of Populism and the other social panaceas of San Antonio.

"Socialism," Bob asked, "What's that?"

"Socialism? That's when there won't be no rich and there won't be no poor. That's when every man will have a job and everybody will be free and happy."

"Is that the same as William J. Bryan is for?"

The workingman of the prairies shook his head. "No. William Jennings Bryan hasn't got no more Socialism in him than a jackrabbit. Socialism is the workingman's idea. Bryan is a good man, but he's only a lawyer." The boy pondered that a moment. His father was a lawyer, too, and he believed that Old Robert sought a life that would benefit the plain man, all men. He turned to look the old Irishman in the eye, but he held his tongue; the driver's face had a shining earnestness, a single-minded devotion to the thought he was framing so eloquently. "Everybody," the old man said as the mules went clacking on, "everybody will have a plenty of everything, because they will be working whenever they want to." He continued, the words flowing from his lips, sonorously now, to say that all workingmen will have good clothes, even two or three new suits if they should want that. And all they'd need do would be to go to the store and fit them, then take them and walk out because they were entitled to them. So it will be with everything the workingman needs. And young men like Bob here, as soon as he and his girl finish their schooling can go and make a home together and there will be good homes for all and no real estate men. The Irishman spoke of a glorious land of milk and honey for the working people in this millenium coming soon. The rich would vanish unless they worked. And then, catching his breath, the Irishman looked at the boy for the first time since he had flown off on this magnificent fancy and he asked Bob sharply: "Well, why don't you ask me no questions? What

you ask I can answer. Anybody knows about Socialism can answer everything."

Bob was over-awed, and glowing to the words that touched some chord in him, replied: "I would like to learn that piece that you just said."

"Piece!" the Irishman exclaimed. "So you think it's just a saying piece I was telling! No, boy, you are wrong. It is not a saying piece, it is just what is going to happen. It is just what people are a going to do. And let the capitalists beware, because the working people are a going to rise up and have their own due. And boy, you ain't got only to learn to say it, you got to learn the way to do it. And then the world will be free and you and all the other boys and girls will have a happy home such as I never did have and maybe never will have because it ain't a coming, maybe, afore I'm dead and gone."

Bob nerved himself and asked when it was going to happen.

"I don't know just when and nobody knows just when. But sure as them mules are out in front of us, it's coming."

The mules were making good time; they were the fastest walking animals Bob had ever seen and time flew by as it never flew before when the old man jerked his head to the right: "There's a grading camp just over the hill," he said. "Do you want to get out there? The first bridge gang is three miles further on, at the Colorado River. I reckon you will wind up on the bridge gang to get the better pay; you're young, you're strong. But you'd do better working a few days on a grade gang so as to get broke in before you do bridge work. Don't think, boy, it's like working on a farm where you rest at the same time you're working. It ain't. On the bridge gang you get drove hard every minute, and no farm boy can't stand it if he ain't learned how."

As Bob jumped down the old man waved his whip in farewell. "And don't you ever forget what I told you."

The men on the tracks looked up curiously as the big boy in the cowhide boots asked the foreman for work. Yes, there was work, dry-mixing concrete. It was a long time before the mechanical concrete-mixer was used and Bob did not know that the job was regarded as about the heaviest work done anywhere in the whole great range of railroad construction, the hardest save the work of the steel gangs that laid the rails.

Tom Kelly, Bob's opposite on his first job, was a lean, rangy sixty, clean-shaven, bright-eyed, long-jawed. His long face was topped by iron-grey hair and his eyes were the same color. The straw boss assigned the youngster a bunk to share with the old man in the big tent. It was lined on all four sides with rough pineboard two-deck bunks. The mattresses were big canvas bags stuffed with hay. All were double beds so that two men slept above, two below. Each pair used the same blanket.

Work started at seven in the morning, continued until noon for the mid-day dinner and knocking-ou time as six. The meals, Bob noted with satisfaction, were good; solid food that stayed with you, better meals than Bob ever ate at home except on holidays.

Certain of his strength, cocky, Bob worked about forty minutes when suddenly his breath went out and his muscles throbbed painfully. He felt he was beginning to break into pieces. The work which began so blithely turned to nightmare. It was so fast and so hard he could not breathe. The sun burned as if he were in a hot stove. His head swam and he found he was working with his mouth wide open, gulping great mouthfuls of air. Can a man really go on? Can work be so hard? Yet the others were doing it. Wasn't he as strong? Keep in time, shush, shush, shush, went the shovelfuls, meet your partner at the middle of the board. Tom Kelly's long face came close to the youngster's, and he heard the man whisper: "Kid, you got to go to the bushes." Bob reflected on this, wielding his shovel desperately, wondering dimly if the man was ridiculing him. The next time they came even at the middle of the concrete board, Kelly said again: "Kid, I'm telling you. You got to go squat in the bushes." He delayed long enough to whisper: "I'm going. Minute after I'm gone, put down your shovel and follow me. Do just as I do."

By then Bob's knees were buckling and he dropped his shovel to follow his partner who was headed for the bushes. When Bob caught up with him the old man had let down his overalls and was crouching in a clump of underbrush. The youngster did the same and came to rest on his heels. Old Tom said:

"Kid, you been working on a farm. You can't work that way on a bridge gang. You got to learn how to rest while

you're a working. You don't know how yet. Got a pipe, ain't you?"

"I don't smoke. I chew."

"Well," the man said, "go get yourself a pipe. This noontime you go buy a cornpipe for a dime, get yourself a good one. Get some long-cut tobacco, that's one way you'll get some rest. No man can't keep nobody from smoking. To smoke you got to clear your pipe. Everybody's got a right to scrape out his pipe. Everybody's got a right to go find a piece of grass to clean it with. And then's he's got to fill it up, don't he? And that long-cut tobacco takes more time to fill. By this time you got yourself some little rest. Now kid, do like I say and you will be all right. Feel better now?" So Bob learned his first lesson in survival in the unsung war of the job. The workingclass war.

The youngster in time became a wiry, experienced railroad hand. His body toughened, his hand grew hard with callous and his confidence returned.

He listened to the men talk, to their ideas, learned what manner of men workingmen are. He listened to their talk every night after the fierce day's work and they accepted the kid, advising him, noting his quiet respect for them, their age, and though they regarded him as someone from another world, gauging his schooling by his talk, they asked no questions of his past. If he wanted to tell them, okay, they would like to hear. Every man's story was grist, supplied the topics of conversation, the sole entertainment they had here on the prairies where there was neither newspaper, nor book, nor theater, not even a tavern. The men had only themselves, their own resources.

Darkness fell shortly after supper and they built huge bonfires against the night chill. He never forgot the sight of the men, crouching, the red of the flames reflected on their faces, their huddled company under the sky with its bright constellations. And they talked far into the night.

The youngster listened, silent, to Jim Burns, the small, wiry Scotchman, to Aaron Ludwig, six feet six, with giant's shoulders, a man pleasing to the eye as Lincoln was; wandering men who worked as teamsters during the winters in the big cities.

At the first sign of spring, they signed up with railroad contractors and shipped out to construction comps. None would have anything to do with farm work. "They were mas-

ters," Bob said later, "of the art of doing the heaviest work that men have done since the pyramids were built in Egypt. And they lived through it by mastering a certain art of evasion."

The men were a revelation to Bob. He came to admire the sober beauty of thought, the honesty which he had never before heard on the fundamental questions of life, and he was influenced by something that could only come out of such a crucible, the profound cause of brotherhood.

Six months passed fast, and the young, toughened son of the San Antonio lawyer loved his new life. The men came to accept him as theirs. He never mentioned his father's profession, feeling somehow, that his origin would build a wall between him and his fellows. But he could not resist, on long evenings, sketching away with a thick pencil on any piece of paper that was handy, paper bags, stationery for letters, wrapping paper. He had grown so familiar with his co-workers that he did not mind their presence about him as he drew, men at work on the railroads, sketches of big hands, big feet, shod and unshod, the grizzled faces of old-timers whose mustaches stick out beyond their cheeks, box cars, desert scenes, jackrabbits, mesquite, all the things of Texas which his eye would catch.

He had, some time before, in a San Antonio barber shop, learned of such magazines as *Judge* and *Puck,* and discovered the existence of men who drew pictures to illustrate stories or to make you laugh. Jokes were printed below, the gag-lines, as he later learned they were called. He had scanned the work of a man named Zim and another Sullivant, two popular magazine cartoonists who made him chuckle. Then he encountered the work of an artist named Art Young in the midwest newspapers like the *Inter-Ocean* and other big Chicago journals. He wanted to make pictures like Art Young but he was ashamed to say anything about that for a long time.

The men, like old Tom, and Jim Burns, clapped their thighs as he drew, and spoke their admiration. Tom sat watching Bob draw a jackrabbit one day and he said, softly, "Seems to me, kid, you ought to follow that up. You're an artist. You got a gift, kid, it ain't everybody can put down what he sees before him." Bob listened gravely to the men and said that sometime, maybe, he would try his hand. He wanted to say that he would like to draw like Art Young but it seemed pre-

sumptuous; besides, they had probably never seen a drawing of his idol.

Yes, it was a good life, hard, but rewarding, this rough companionship of the men who accepted him, youth and all, "gift" and all. And though the work was hard (it never became easy though his muscles had hardened and his endurance equalled the others) the days were exhilarating.

But this morning of May, after he had been on the job only an hour, Jim Burns accidentally dropped a big rock on the upturned point of a spade which catapulted across the dump like a shot. The point of the spade struck Bob a glancing blow on the elbow, paralyzing it momentarily. He was unable to move it the rest of that day.

The men gathered about the youngster, solemnly, old Tom cursing the luck. Bob did know the iron rule of the camps. You dared not quit even for five minutes without quitting for keeps. You had to draw your pay and get out immediately. The rule apparently was a drastic precaution against any possible tendency toward a strike, a heritage of the labor upheavals of '94, which still burned in the memory of the older men, though they were totally unknown to the boy from the farm.

The straw boss handed Bob thirty cents for two hours work and politely asked him to go on. None spoke against the rule. It was iron-clad and they gathered silently around the kid, shaking hands, clapping him on the shoulder. "Take up drawing," old Tom advised, as he said goodbye. "You got a gift, kid, and don't you forget it."

As he walked down the road, a solidly built lad, short, snub-nosed, overtook him. The stranger too carried his luggage on the end of a stick over his shoulder. The two boys said their "Howdy" and soon they were matching experiences and discovering they had much in common. Both were footloose, both wanted better jobs, both had confidence in their prowess.

The other boy, whose name was Jim Gallagher, was even a member of the Carpenters' Union, AFL, and he showed Bob his union card. He suggested they catch a freight north to a camp where the pay and the grub was even better than down in these parts. Jim's father was a railroadman and Jim knew the ropes. Bob liked his alert, cocky assurance. It did not require much persuasion to team up and make the trek to greener pastures together. They worked in many camps, moving back

and forth across the state and found themselves in El Paso. There they caught a freight train going north. It was about half a mile long, which was good, for it is hard for the brakeman to find you. They climbed into an empty freight car, a few miles out on the desert. It was just daylight and they opened the side door a few inches on the east side of the train where the sun was rising. They watched the strange, beautiful desert as the train sped northward.

Rounding a curve, the train crew noticed the side door was open and soon the little trapdoor high in the end of the car opened and a pair of legs stuck through. Then a big man dropped into the car. He had a pickhandle in his hand; a brakeman. Then another dropped down, a little man but he too held a big pickhandle. They were used to help tighten up the handbrakes in those days before air brakes were generally used in the Southwest. The two approached the boys and the big one said, brusquely:

"What you got?"

Jim showed his card as a member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners.

"Stick it." the big man said. "Let's see what you got."

When Jim expressed surprise that a railroadman would refuse to recognize a union card, the big one said, "Give me four bits."

"We ain't got four bits," Bob said.

"Then you get off," the big brakeman said, getting a fresh hold on his pickhandle and pointing toward the side door. And the little brakeman threw the door wide open and said, "Get out of that door."

The train was lumbering along at forty miles an hour and the face of the desert so beautiful a moment before, changed. Now it could mean death. In this time before automobiles a hundred mile walk on the desert could be capital punishment, death by thirst, even if you survived without a broken bone from the leap. Both men raised their pickhandles and the little one seemed to want to be fiercer than the big one. "Jump, you sons of bitches," he said.

It was serious indeed, and Bob said, "Now, you wait a minute. How do you know but that I've got something. We ain't got any money but I got a watch-chain."

The big one said he wanted to see it and he let his pickhandle

down on the floor and held out his left hand. Bob began fumbling in his overalls pocket with both hands, and when he pulled his hands out, his right hand held the six-shooter that he had clipped, by its hammer, to the apron of his overalls beneath the jumper. He held the gun by the middle, casually, as though he was only getting it out of his pocket while he was searching for the watch chain. Then with his left hand he brought out a ten-cent leather watch chain he had bought in a Mexican curio shop back home and he held it out to the big brakeman.

The brakeman had no eyes for the left hand with the watch-chain; his gaze was fastened on Bob's right hand with the gun. The little brakeman looked at the leather watch chain and said, "What the hell is that?"

Bob said to the big fellow: "Here, take it. I'm giving you the watch chain." The little one shook his pickhandle and yelled, "Hell, that ain't no watch chain. Hell, you jump off this train." Standing on the other side of the big fellow, he could not see the gun in Bob's right hand.

The big brakeman shifted his eyes from Bob's right hand which was holding the gun by the middle, hanging down, not pointing at anyone, and looked at the watch chain in Bob's left hand. "Well," he said, judiciously, "it could hold a watch."

And he took it. Bob was careful because he couldn't know, in turn, whether the big brakeman had a gun. The little fellow was still yelling, "That ain't no watch chain," but the big brakeman said, "Come on." The two of them climbed out the trapdoor, the little one with a dazed look.

The desert was suddenly beautiful again, more beautiful than Bob had ever seen it, and wilder than anything he had ever known in Texas. But the two boys shunned the slightly open side-door whenever the train curved to the right, because Jim's father being a railroadman, he knew that on the desert the crew sometimes kept a rifle in the caboose. At Alamagordo they swung off and walked into town.

So 1900 passed, 1901, 1902. The two boys worked the railroads and when jobs grew scarce, they labored in the southwestern cities at anything they could find, odd jobs, demolition of buildings, carpentering. And back in San Antonio Bob became a union man.

In 1903 an eloquent carpenter named H. L. A. Holman, past his middle years, a union man and a Socialist, was paired off with Bob to put up inside sheating, rough work. The two worked well together, fast and expertly. The old Socialist discovered that Bob made a good audience, talked union to the youngster, and Bob promptly signed up.

At the age of 19, he became a member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, Local 717. The carpenters were among the leading unions in the eight-hour movement and had, as far back as 1890, established the eight-hour day for their trade in most cities of the United States. Bob carried his union card to his dying day.

—St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, 1912

America's Foremost Cartoonist

ONE EVENING, in 1904, when Bob had just reached twenty, working again as a carpenter in San Antonio, he sat under the yellow lamp in the little parlor, near the table with its stack of books, and he scanned the day's edition of the San Antonio *Gazette,* studying the drawings. Why, he could make cartoons and etchings as good as these, better perhaps. He thought of old Tom's words to him, "Follow your gift, kid."

The next day he walked down to the one-story building of the San Antonio *Gazette* and talked to the editor, a haggard-faced, bulky man who wore octagonal glasses. Bob showed some of his drawings to the editor who glanced at them, and then turned to the young man. Yes, he could use Bob to draw if he would also take on a few other tasks, like helping the stereotyper and the pressman. Bob replied eagerly that he would do anything they need. He would, indeed, sweep the floors if they allowed him to draw for the paper. He was hired.

He came home joyfully, and said nonchalantly that he was now working for the *Gazette* as its "artist." You can easily reconstruct the scene: Routez' fond gaze and old Robert's surprise, glad that his boy had returned from the railroad camps and was now a newspaperman. Who knows, he might even make good at it. The father was beginning to understand that this rangy, big-striding, sharp-eyed son had qualities. His mind was quick, sharp, perceptive, and though he spurned Blackstone, he might do better in this world than his father.

Bob threw himself into the newspaper's work with that single-minded intensity that was his all his life. Work was play, relaxation, as well as labor. Little mattered so long as he could get the drawings done he wanted to get done.

Bob thought nothing of staying twelve hours, fourteen

hours at his job, helping the stereotypers, the engravers, the circulation men, and then, in his own precious hours, scratching his cartoon with a stylus on the clean, baked chalk in the method of the time. And as he worked he studied the newspapers of the country that came to the office. Something about one, the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* caught his eye every time it arrived. It had the glamor of big names, it had a crusading fervor that was not uncommon in those days, it was the leading newspaper of the vast Mississippi Valley. And it had fine drawings. Beautiful drawings. Could he do as well? He thought about that often and believed, finally, that he could. Yes, he said to himself one day, he must go North and try his hand. He knew, by now, it was a good hand. He had confidence, verve, courage and ambition. He would go North, to St. Louis, and see for himself.

Twenty-one and going away, up North. He knew it was forever, this time, and he turned to the window of the train to look hungrily at the prairie town that was moving back. There was love in his heart for the big mysterious thing that was Texas, the great flawless blue of the sky that was something incredible, the brooding cactus, the ferocious sun that burned in its heaven, the tall, long-boned humans who walked the prairies and the shorter, swarthy ones, the Mexicans, who lived and toiled here before the long ones came. Yet there was something akin to hate in him as well, but if someone were to ask what compounded the hate he could not have begun to answer.

He wanted to go, he had to go, with that primitive intensity that was his and if he stopped to analyze it he might have traced it to the way the people he knew had thought and had acted, the way life about him was ordered. Deep down were ineradicable memories like that of the delegation of starched women who came to chide Routez whose baby died because she didn't attend church services; the opulent razzle-dazzle of the railroad office, the bone-wearying work and loneliness of the men on the railroad gangs; the scorn for the Negroes he had known, like Mrs. Body and her husband whose first name was desperately Mister; the Negro thumb the white man carried in his pocket.

All this was in the hate but if someone had asked him he could not have answered. Not then, and not yet. Nearly everything that had the shine of truth and of dignity seemed somehow to come from far away.

His brother Joe, then fourteen, walked with him from the little brown house to the streetcar while Routez looked after them from the gateway until they turned the corner. The streetcar brought them to the station for he wanted one last look at his past. He knew the train would cross the bridges across Salt Creek and the Cimarron River whose foundations he had worked on.

Bob wanted to ride the freights to St. Louis; he had a vague sense of guilt paying money when the distance could be made inside a boxcar as well. But once he decided to go, Routez had persuaded him to go straightaway, fast, and find work at once. Above the cost of the ticket he had enough for a $15 suit of clothes and a surplus of $12, all of which he rolled into a little wad and cached it safely away on his person.

Joe handed him the two shoeboxes filled with sandwiches and hard boiled eggs that Routez had packed. The conductor called out, "All aboard." Bob took a last look at his kid brother growing up so tall and slender and smart-looking. And Joe called out as the train began to move, "Bob, don't drink!" Then Bob knew that Routez had planned this final word. He smiled, waving, and replied, "I won't." And for years he thought of that final plea every time he took a drink.

In St. Louis he found a tiny, bare room on the fifth floor of a rickety building on Locust Street that cost $2 a week, one-quarter of his surplus. Two dollars did not pay for heat, the landlady said loftily, and he discovered that autumn in St. Louis, this town up North, had a penetrating chill. Every evening he found a spot in the public library reading room where he could be warm and where he would ransack the shelves for the histories and works on art mainly. Each morning he tried the engraving shops for a job. They had a few odds and ends for him, at piece work rates. He carried the stuff home to his room five flights up and completed it wearing his overcoat and Texas sombrero, a tall, strange, gaunt young man with a blanket wrapped around his frame, drawing away under the gaslight. You would have seen a striking, intent face: the eyes a bright-brown, small, slanted slightly, eyes that looked at you squarely; a strong, straight nose, a high arched forehead topped by thin, dark-brown hair, a long, firm chin and a big, obstinate mouth that curved often into a big grin which showed strong, white teeth. Broad-shouldered, this young man was long-armed, long-legged, and he was given to quick, explosive move-

ments. He would sit sketching for a long time and then leap to his feet, yet his motions had the lithe grace of a frontiersman. And sometimes, when his exuberance boiled over he would yell "Eeyah," flinging his arms skyward.

Fortune struck, and he got work with the Sanders Engraving Company near the foot of Olive Street, a regular full-time job in the art department paying $10 a week. He promptly joined the YMCA on Grand Avenue where he could box in the gymnasium when his vigorous frame needed loosening. The amateur boxers came to know him as a fellow with a stiff right and fast footwork who could charge like a bull or spar lightly like a dancer; they liked him for his quick smile or grin when the bout ended.

St. Louis in that time was already a wealthy metropolis of the Mississippi Valley, endlessly fascinating to the frontiersman, with its big thoroughfares and imposing downtown buildings and its endless little dark streets, where the working people lived. The contrasts of riches and poverty which always caught the artist's eye set his long legs walking and he roamed the city to discover the sprawling, teeming working class neighborhoods of the Negroes, and near them the descendants of the Germans, the Irish, the French who had come early.

It was a time too when the pendulum of national wealth swung the other way again and the bony figures of half-starved men and women and children were everywhere. Every day he left his cubicle he passed two shoe factories where, for the first time in his life, he saw great crowds of girls employed as workers in a modern factory. He did not yet know the word "proletariat" but he was seeing its essence and the girls were a source of wonder to him. He thought of the time when his mother had told the confidant who was her son that she would give anything in the world to be able to get out and find a job.

He made a point of it to be on the scene when the girls went to work, for he found them strangely and endlessly attractive, as an artist and as a young man of twenty-one. No doubt some of them turned to look at the tall young man in a sombrero. But sketching girls is scarcely sufficient for an artist when he is twenty-one and he came to know one of them well through two brothers of hers whom he met at the Y and who worked in the shoe factory.

Inviting him to supper one evening, he was taken with her pretty and independent ways. He discovered, one day, that her birthday coincided with his and it was characteristic of Routez' son that he asked her mother's consent to give the girl a birthday present. And the mother said, "All right, but what did you have in mind to give her?"

He wanted to give her a nice little .22 calibre revolver. He thought it would be appropriate because this was the girl's 22nd birthday. The mother looked at him appalled: "What in the world would she do with a revolver?"

"She could practice shooting with it, of course. It would be a little pearl-handled one just right for a girl."

"Where could she shoot with it?"

"Well, she could go just outside of the city limits."

But the mother said, "Don't you go giving my daughter any savage weapons. Such things are not for a big city."

He thought about that and he decided the mother was right: he had much to learn about the ways of the big city, recognizing with a flush of shame that he was still a back-country hick, that he had some way to go before he could regard himself as a knowing citizen of the metropolis. He continued to travel in working class circles, making many friends among them, exhilarated as he was by the fresh strange novelty of these Americans who were, somehow, so different from anybody he had known in San Antonio, in the places where Routez and old Robert moved. These people reminded him of the laboring men on the railways, simple, clean-cut, direct, who had none of the cautious double-talk that he found characteristic of the cattle kings and the railroad muckamucks in San Antonio. Many of those he met at the little Saturday night parties he began to attend belonged to trade unions and he could show his AFL carpenters' union card and achieve the proud sense of belonging.

But always he yearned to draw cartoons. It wasn't much fun endlessly sketching strawberries and apples and peaches for the colored labels that Sanders Engraving Company manufactured for the canneries. He haunted the doorway of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* offices, his sketches under-arm. And one day he brought the editor a drawing of three bear cubs he had made the previous day at the St. Louis Zoo. He was hired. Eeyah!

The city editor was a taciturn man with an explosive tem-

per who came to be regarded as a genius of his trade, Oliver K. Bovard, a trigger-quick newspaper executive who knew how to drive his staff to get news that made people buy papers and who was, at the same time, regarded as a straight-shooter, fair though harsh. The men under him respected him as they feared him.

A galaxy of gifted newspapermen, some of whom later became prominent in literary life, worked on the paper then. Joseph Pulitzer, the elder, who had founded the powerful organ and the New York *World* as well, had handed the scepter to his son Ralph who continued, generally speaking, his father's policies that were so successful. The monopolist's choking sway upon journalism was not yet complete: this Mississippi Valley organ often caught the passionate dissents and blundering movements of the back country Populists, the shirt-sleeved followers of William Jennings Bryan. Men like William Marion Reedy, son of an Irish policeman, reigned in the intellectual salons of the city, its glittering bars chiefly. Reedy, who Bob later regarded as "beyond question" the foremost intellect of the city at the time was a man of baffling brilliance, fluent in speech, possessed of a poetic imagination and independence of spirit that made him the most admired man in town. And there was Clark McAdam who wrote trenchant paragraphs in the column he conducted, painting splendid word pictures that caught the politics of the time and who had a prominent say in the paper's editorial sanctum. McAdam quickly came to like the big Texan whose eyes had a quick glint of understanding and whose hands could transcribe that understanding to the paper on the drawing board.

One day Bovard glanced at the drawings Bob made and assigned him to one of the strangest jobs the young artist had ever heard of. He was to be the chronicler of the dead. Each morning he arrived at the city morgue at half past six, where the night superintendent answered the bell, opened the place and led him through to the dead room. It was an enormous and forbidding cavern, damp and slightly refrigerated, and an entire wall held the large pigeonholes like those of an old-fashioned roller-top desk but enlarged to a fantastic scale, each pigeonhole being about three feet wide, three feet high and seven and a half feet long. From each came the sickly smell of death. The superintendent, with a list in his hand, sleepily

escorted Bob from pigeonhole to pigeonhole, verifying the location of each of the cadavers of persons whose bodies had been brought in during the night Most of these died by their own hand, others were murdered, or had drowned. Bob sketched each face quickly, then jotted down a memorandum of the morgue number, and the name, if it was known.

Every morning, often before sun-up, the young artist snatched a glass of rye at the saloon across from the morgue and plunged into the doorway of the dead. He brought his sketches back to the newspaper office, dumped them on the city editor's desk, and went out to a dubious breakfast. When he returned the leg-men of the paper were telephoning their stories of the night's crimes and Bob's sketches were consulted to see if they jibed with the name or the description of the dead.

If ever there was a job to depress a young man this was it and for it he got $18 a week. Every dawn he held his rendezvous with the dead and he thought about them, thought hard, especially when he encountered such scenes as an entire family lying on the slabs—an unemployed father (the "Panic" of 1907 was on), the mother and two children whom the parents took with them in death. The sight of them on the marble slabs, pulled out of the huge wall of pigeonholes, was unbearable, for they seemed almost alive: only a dried up trickle of blood near the nose and mouth told the somber tale.

Why, he wondered, was this ghoulish job wished on him, of all people, and one day a casual remark by Carlyle Martin, head of the art department, gave him the answer. "You, Bob, can make these dead look alive, other artists let them stay dead."

It was then no mystery why the boy who had roamed the living prairie swarming with the quick and not the dead, would become something of a young philosopher, brooding over these matters of life and death. In his readings at the public library which he frequented even after there was enough heat in his bedroom, he came across a fragment from Aristotle, who too had brooded on these matters under the Athenian sun. Aristotle said, as Bob jotted the words down:

"And yet, a dead body has exactly the configuration as a living one; but for all that it is not a man. So also no hand of bronze or wood can possibly be a hand in more than name. For like a physician in a painting, or like a flute in sculpture, in

spite of its name it will be unable to do the office which that name implies. Precisely in the same way no part of a dead body, such as its eye or its hand, is really an eye or a hand."

The richly-hued life of the poor drew him irresistibly, a good foil to the pigeonholed dead who were his assignment. And he moved among them far more than he did among the city's intelligentsia whom he had begun to meet as a promising artist on the big newspaper. He sat some nights with the garrulous men and women who whiled long midnight hours away around the table laden with bottles of whiskey, talking poetry, art, free love, a little politics, wisecracking in the way of the characters in the plays and books they had read of Oscar Wilde, and Bob read Wilde afterward, discovering that the man was an artist but these, basking in his bulky shadow, were not. Something about their bohemian dilletantism repelled him. They did not work hard enough; their talk was frivolous, remote, had an above-the-battle air which he could not take. If they talked poetry they should plunge into the icy waters of this muse and splash furiously to all the shores. That he would understand. But that was not the way of these people. Theirs were not whole-hearted, single-minded qualities to which he would have attached his affection, his regard. No, that they were not. In his little room he began to read the poetry that was the subject of so much of their talk, and he felt they did not go far beyond re-writing the verses of Wilde and of Poe. Their premium was on the eccentric and the eccentricity seemed to him little more than humdrum drunkenness. They were not whole.

There was in him a Puritanic streak, heritage perhaps of little Routez and old Robert, and though, at this time, he was not averse to tilting the little glass, or looking upon the wine when it was red, he felt a trace of scorn for others who made a fetish of it. The men on the railroads drank hard, true, but they worked hard, and John Barleycorn was often their only solace. He did not find it in himself to blame them, but these were different people. True, men like William Reedy whom he admired drank hard too and often, as he came to associate with them in the course of his work. Bob helped them home as they babbled and jabbered in their alcoholism, no longer masters of themselves. He wondered why they let loose the reins of self-discipline, grew slack in their thought and their character. What ailed them he did not yet know, but he sensed that they were

clutched by defeat even though some, like Reedy, were the admired and the pursued. The young Lochinvar from the Texas plains did not understand defeat, and though he felt compassion, of a sort, the stern core of him responded to them with a muted contempt, mainly.

So it was not fully an accident that he was drawn to one man here, in St. Louis, whom he came to regard as his best friend, a man he came to love, to admire, as he did no other man of his youth. He met him at one of the parties of the intelligentsia, the man came once and no more. Dr. Leo Caplan was the man's name, a quiet middle-aged physician with dark, luminous eyes who sat at the table, sipping one glass of whiskey throughout the night, and who talked, when the conversation grew hot and boisterous, of his own ideas, Socialist ideas. The others glanced at one another as he spoke and Bob noted the supercilious smile. For the first time in his life, save for that moment he had spent with the Irish freight driver far off in Texas when he was still too young to understand, Bob felt he had caught a glimpse into the brooding heart of mankind as the frail Jewish doctor talked, quietly, his resonant voice stilling the others. There was a vision of man's existence. He saw the little doctor again, the next day, fascinated by the man's talk, his behavior, his modesty and his love for mankind. The young Texan came to find in the physician all the attributes he felt a man should have: humanity, intelligence, courage. The man worked hard, studied hard, and Bob knew the Mississippi community regarded Dr. Caplan as one of the best in his profession.

Caplan treated the poor without fee if they could not pay, for a few coins if they could. There was something so gentle, yet so irresistibly strong about him, that the young cartoonist put him ahead of all other men he knew. When Caplan talked of his science his eyes glowed under the shock of coal-black hair, and that Bob understood. He began to read the books that Caplan read, and listen to the music Caplan played on his phonograph and the son of the cattle ranges came to hear, for the first time, the music of Wagner, which he remembered first, of Tchaikovsky, of Dvorak and his New World Symphony which remained his favorite piece of music all his life. The older man sensed a youngster of unusual promise; the doctor studied Bob's drawings, and he seemed to realize, lover of art that he

was, that an American Daumier was in the making. He brought Bob a book of Daumier's drawings which entranced the young cartoonist. He spoke of Goya and others who had put their art to the service of their people like warriors who wield bright swords for them. And it was about this time that the resolve crystallized in Bob to use his art as Leo used his scalpel and his knowledge, for mankind. Art, of itself, he concluded, had no value beyond pleasuring the artist if it were not put to service, the service of his neighbors on this earth.

And so when Dr. Caplan talked to Bob about the Socialist Party, to which he belonged, the young artist asked if he could join. And it is little wonder that Bob, the son of a Tidewater patrician, became a Socialist in 1907.

Every Monday, on pay-day, Bob stopped at the old Post Office on Eighth and Oliver Streets to buy a money order for five dollars to send Routez. It made for regularity in writing her, and each time he enclosed a brief note, saying he was well, the customary salutation of a dutiful son. One August day, of 1907, he lingered at the stand-up writing desk in the post-office corridor to write Routez that he had become intensely interested in Socialism, that it opened up an amazing new perspective on life and that he would probably join the Socialist Party.

A week later old Robert sent him a letter that warned the boy of Socialism's errors. Accompanying the letter was a copy of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. Bob, that night, put aside the booklet called *Scientific Socialism* by the Rev. Charles H. Vail and he sat up reading the old bible of the dusty radicals of the 1880's and 1890's. He lay awake two nights and read and when he finished he put the book aside, murmuring "It's wrong." The next day, September 1, 1907, he went to the office of the Socialist weekly newspaper, St. Louis *Labor,* during his lunch hour, made out an application and took from Otto Paul a little red card of membership in the Socialist Party.

He was bursting, unable to restrain his enthusiasm for the great new gospel which would liberate man, make every man a giant on earth. He talked Socialism to everyone he met, on the *Post-Dispatch,* and outside. He did not flinch when they countered with their objections to which he listened soberly, trying to conceal and control his impatience.

That *cause celèbre* of American labor of the time, the case of the three union men, leaders of the Western Federation of

The editor's note at the lower left says: "The Post-Dispatch *sent its chief cartoonist, Minor, to Chicago to get intimate first-hand sketches of the meat packers now on trial there for violating the anti-trust law by combining their operations to control the prices of meat and its by-products. The result, reproduced herewith on this page, strikingly illustrates the superiority of the sketch over the photograph in revealing character and personality.*

"Readers of the Post-Dispatch *have seen photographs of all the men represented here many times, but they have never seen such graphic and characteristic portrayal of them."*

Miners, set him walking the hot streets of St. Louis distributing leaflets, sowing the literature like a plowman sowing seeds, pessionately arguing their innocence with anyone who would, as they said in Texas, ogger. The men had been framed, he explained, as so many workers had been, before that time and since, because they led valiant labor struggles for wages and conditions of life that would help the miners retain their dignity as human beings. The defendants, Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone, had been kidnapped by Utah authorities in 1906, and charged with the assassination of former Governor Frank Steunenberg, a lie which was foisted on the public by a Pinkerton stoolpigeon named Harry Orchard.

President Theodore Roosevelt sought to inflame public opinion against them as they sat in prison, before trial, calling them —as he did Eugene Debs—"undesirable citizens," and the big mining corporations were determined to send them to their deaths, or at the least, to long prison terms to discredit the union. The outcry of American labor and other portions of the populace was stimulated by the facts given them by thousands of such men as Bob.

After a bitter court fight in which Clarence Darrow succeeded in breaking Orchard's story, the defendants were triumphantly acquitted by the jury.

Bob read every word he could find on the case and he buttonholed the members of the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*. Some of the men came to look upon him with a sallow eye, wondering what in hell had gotten into this Texas product. But they had to listen to his compelling arguments. It was hard to ignore his bright eyes and his impassioned words.

And he became, increasingly, a figure in the local Socialist movement which already had a considerable history. For Joseph Weydemeyer had lived here, that remarkable German immigrant, the old friend of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, who regarded him as one of the best in the world. Weydemeyer pioneered the Socialist cause in America. He had fought in the German Revolution of 1848 and on his arrival, in 1851, he passionately espoused the cause of emancipation, labored mightily against slavery and spurred the nascent American labor movement to identify itself with liberation of labor in the black skin, as Marx wrote. Weydemeyer's cogent arguments and sage organizational qualities helped, more than any other man's, to

swing the German-Americans behind Lincoln. He sought to avoid a split in the Republican Convention of 1860 and thus helped assure Lincoln's nomination. Abe commissioned him an artillery captain on the staff of General John C. Fremont, with headquarters in St. Louis. Weydemeyer's magnetism brought a regiment of volunteers into the fray and his talents as a military man (he had been an artillery officer in Germany) inspired the victory over the Confederate guerrilla forces in that area. Mustered out as a Major-General, he was elected in 1865 to the office of County Auditor in St. Louis, but, worn by his labors, he came down with cholera during the epidemic in 1866 and he died in the prime of his life, at the age of 48.

The imprint left by Weydemeyer and the pioneer Socialists must have been felt in the St. Louis of Bob's time and Bob himself must have known something of this tradition. For the city, with its large German population of the time, had a considerable Socialist movement which the Germans led. Bob was chosen by his branch to become a member of the city committee of that party. He sat on the platform when men like Eugene V. Debs, Victor Berger and Big Bill Haywood came to speak.

But the passage of time has shown that, for a variety of historic reasons, the Socialist movement in America did not fulfill the vision of Weydemeyer. Though the dissents of the time engendered by the stormy growth of the monopolies brought recruits by the thousands into the Socialist stream, a certain opportunism blighted most of the leaders. Maturing within the Socialist ranks was a cleavage between right and left, a factor Bob could not then realize, but which would, a few years later, affect him enormously. He did not known then, he did not know until a dozen years afterward, that the knowledge of Socialism here, its science, was thin, and most were satisfied when they obtained a sense of its general outline, its ethical and social teachings. They did not yet get at the root of the matter, the primary philosophical and economic postulates. They were satisfied to know that man's history, as Marx and Engels had written in the *Communist Manifesto,* is the product of class struggles; that mankind cleaved into two major classes, those who toiled and created the goods of life and those who lived off the fruits of others' toil. That was clear enough, especially for Routez' son who had worked the railroads and had looked squarely into the bony face of poverty. The Socialist Party,

nationally, placed no premium on the comprehensive study of Marx, of historical and dialectical materialism. But what he knew he knew and it thrilled him to the point of exaltation: there was an answer. He could foresee a new era when no man would be enemy to his brother.

If he did not sit down to study, in all profundity, what few others in his party were studying, he was examining and testing the principles of his craft, his art. Something was wrong with the cartooning of his time. He liked best the work of Art Young and of Thomas J. Nast who had, a generation before, slashed away at the Tweed ring of corruption in New York. He was enthralled by Daumier, by Goya. Bob wanted something in his drawings, more than the techniques of the day could achieve and he sat late at night, working, sketching, re-sketching, getting up from the drawing board to think, and often, to act out, to live his cartoons. He would flex his arm into the shape of the arm he wanted to draw; grimace in the expression he wanted to catch; he would sweat and heave and grunt and roar with the moods he sought to get down on paper. Sometimes he would shout his triumphant "Eeyah!" But something was wrong. The drawing board did not catch all he wanted to say. And he had so much to say that increasingly O. K. Bovard was using his cartoons to supplement those of the chief cartoonist.

Clark McAdams, the columnist and editor, had a good idea of Bob's capabilities. The writer was a man of imagination and craft and Bovard assigned him to be Bob's "talk-man," the editor who would work out the day's cartoon with the artist. McAdams had already teamed up with the young Texan. Bob illustrated his column with light, humorous sketches, and Bob's evaluation of McAdams was high.

McAdams worked persistently, yet patiently, to instill a third dimension, a recognition of the depth of events. He relished talking to the young Socialist, respected his ideas although he differed with them. He was a dedicated Jeffersonian Democrat who distrusted the industrial age and could see no good in it, no more than his idol, the sage of Monticello saw, and no more than Bob's father saw. But he maintained a respectful attitude toward all new ideas, and he did like this gifted prairie man who was impatient with all horizons.

The two worked together well. McAdams could tell Bob frankly when he saw crudities in the work of the self-taught artist. He met Bob every morning, sometimes sad, sometimes jovial, and neither said a word about work. Often, for the first hour or so of the day they talked about anything on earth but work, about people, marriage, duck-hunting, boxing. Then one would say, "Got any ideas," and they would be at work. Bob usually had a notion for a picture, McAdams made a purely verbal construction of his ideas, he never tried to describe a possible picture. "Nearly every talk-man working with a cartoonist," Bob said years afterward, "makes the mistake of trying to draw the picture, which he can't draw, instead of instilling the idea. The result is a depiction of sawdust figures."

There were to be no sawdust figures for this man of hot blood and hard muscle who strained at the leash. Pen and ink was regarded indispensable in the technical reproduction of cartoons. Perhaps, Bob mused, that was the fault. How could you paint your cartoon, go at it like Michaelangelo went at his frescoes and get that into a newspaper? As he grappled with the question he thought back and examined the technical process of the cartoon from its beginning as he had learned it.

On the San Antonio *Gazette* he learned the old style engraving, the "chalk-plate" method, for the paper was too poor to pay for photo-engraving or even to buy chalk plates. An old craftsman had taught Bob, at 19, to make his own chalk plates on the steam table at night after work. He would come down to the stereotype room the next morning and draw cartoons on those plates. It was a restricting method. You drew by scratching your thin steel stylus through a layer of chalk down to the surface of the steel plate on which the layer of chalk had been baked. A very stiff drawing resulted.

How, he scratched his head, the hair already thinning to that shining baldness millions were to know a few years later, how do you get a sense of distance, of light, of shade, of the wonderful contrasts in life. How do you suck out all the power there is in the contrasts between white and black and their various shadings that are infinite in their variety. The dimensions Bob sought in his art reflected his search for the meaning of great masses of men, the action, the drama, the fight of life of which he had become a part.

He knew for some time that he could catch more of all

that with a sable brush or a thick grease crayon the size of his thumb, the kind carpenters used to mark lumber, tools he remembered from his days in the sign painters' barn of San Antonio.

The records of olden times show that the first philosophers Thales and Anaximander and Heraclitus were, simultaneously, artisans as well as thinkers: the hand was no member remote, separate, from the eye, the mind. They did and they thought. They designed bridges and fortifications, dug wells and supervised drainage systems and their deeds, their practice, helped to shape their thoughts, their philosophies which caught the first ideas, primitive, true, of matter and of constant change. So it seems to me, it was with this prairie artist.

Man is that animal which makes tools, he had read somewhere, in old Ben Franklin, and it was Frederick Engels who quoted Poor Richard. Well, perhaps he could be a man, an artist, who could make that tool or tools that would express better what the artist of the newspaper wanted to say. He came to believe that the brush and the crayon could be reproduced by the engraving processes of the time.

One day he brought a cartoon into the office he had drawn with these tools. The engravers looked at the drawing, and at him and shrugged their shoulders. It could not be reproduced. Anybody who knew the trade knew that, they said reproachfully. It *could* be reproduced, Bob roared, flinging a great arm around a harassed engraver. The editors begged Bob to go back to pen and ink but McAdams hung back, watching the scene with a share of amusement but with respectful admiration. Anyway, the engravers went to work and returned triumphantly with a badly blurred reproduction. But he was not to be dismayed by a miss on the first shot. Remembering his old experience with chalk plates Bob followed the engravers to their dark and odoriferous caverns, and, in his shirtsleeves, he toiled with the chalk plates and other paraphernalia of the trade and worked out a method which they tried again, doubly skeptical.

A strong clear cartoon emerged in the style which millions today know—one that abandons reliance upon the thin criss-cross of lines supposed to reproduce depth, of a third dimension. His way caught shadow and light and the strong contradictions between them that could better reflect the contradictions of light and shadow, of life that the eye and mind see. Soon all

the newspapers of the land, and of Canada, adopted this infinitely more effective technique. By this time, in 1911, at the age of 27, Bob was the chief editorial cartoonist of the newspaper, his work was admired by the cartoonists of the nation's press. He was soon regarded, in that day of some three thousand newspapers in the United States, as the foremost cartoonist of his time.

He felt the spread of his wings, knew by now they could carry him far. He was the highest paid cartoonist in the nation and, as the rich name-droppers said who cultivated the raw-boned son of Texas, he had genius. Furthermore, in October of 1910, Routez wrote him that old Robert to everyone's surprise but herself, of course, was elected District Judge in San Antonio and in the last line of the proud letter she said Bob need no longer send money home. Bob, too, was proud of his father who had risen, he felt, through the stern strength of his character.

He became well-known in the meeting halls of the poor. There is a handbill for a meeting of this time which carried one of his cartoons from the *Post-Dispatch*. A giant but ragged figure of a steelworker stands staring at a thin coin in his palm while a small fat man labeled "Steel Trust" scurries toward the horizon with a sack of loot containing $1,000,000,000. The caption says, "Protected by Tariff." The leaflet carried a photograph of Bob, a young strong face with the jaws lean, a high forehead, the hair-line receding, the dark eyes quizzical. And the leaflet says: "Eager sympathy for the new ideals of the time, keen insight to the point-of-view of the masses, and a constant watch for a place to charge with his lance some current wrong are characteristics of Robert Minor, Jr., on the evidence of his cartoons in the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*." Bob had "come up from work at common labor," he had advanced "steadily through his own efforts" and at 27 years of age is now "one of the leading cartoonists of the country."

And yet . . . his chief critic was himself. He felt the stern goad of art, for he did not believe his drawings were really adequate. Here he was, getting old now, all of 27, and the world was moving fast. He had never received an hour of formal training in an art school; how could he truly have mastered his techniques? He had no reverence for art as an end in itself. Art, to him, was a means of waging the war of politics. Others

had the gift of oratory; others still were organizers; some wrote. He drew. Were his drawings equal to his political responsibilities? He thought not. He never had the opportunity to compare his work with that of others or to swap ideas on his craft with men of high skill and training. All the guidance in drawing he had he got those few months in the sign painters' shop of San Antonio. That surely was not enough. He became explosively conscious of his lack of knowledge in the field he had chosen as his life's work. He would like to go to New York and look things over, he told Dr. Caplan, confiding his mistrust. Caplan semeed to understand his misgivings. "Go," the old friend said, "have a look."

So, in the summer of 1910, the first vacation of his life, he was off for the Big City. *Collier's Weekly* had reproduced several of his cartoons and its editor, Mark Sullivan, wrote him, inviting him to drop by when he came to New York. More than this letter he treasured one from Art Young, who was the first man he came to see.

The two men cottoned to each other instantly, they were kin indeed. Bob liked the face of this roly-poly middle-aged man with the aureole of hair, prematurely silver, whose face broke often into a smile, taunting somehow, like a Foxy Grandpa. And Art liked the clean, lithe grace and honest countenance of the young midwesterner. The quality that attracted Bob to Art's work—that ardent loyalty to the underdog, his keen wit and devastating satire—belonged to Bob as well. Bob knew what Art was after in such cartoons as the two ragged slum children standing in the tenement street looking up at a starry night, the boy saying to the girl, "Jeez, Mame, look, as thick as bedbugs." They sat up most of the night talking and Bob told Art of the first time he had come across his work and the sense of revelation, in that barber shop back in San Antonio. The older man congratulated Bob upon the power in his drawings, his ability to impart the infinite shadings of black and white. He encouraged the young stranger to talk, his great eyes observing the young man, assessing him.

He invited Bob up again and this time Bob found a half-dozen kindred spirits around the table, men like Glintenkamp, Sloan, others who were soon to appear in the *Masses,* that organ of the rebellious intellectuals of the time, which was founded in 1911. The talk was lusty, punctuated by roars of laughter,

for these were a hardy, boisterous carefree lot of men, full of juice. Carefree, only in a narrow sense, for in the larger the dissents and anguish of the times stirred their blood. They were young men, life still lay ahead, and they eyed each other sympathetically. Art drew a sketch of Bob, tall, balding, bushy of eyebrow, hands on hips, his roll of drawings in his big fist, his legs long and he endowed Bob with a pair of enormous feet, a sort of Quixote of the cartoon.

by ART YOUNG

And it could well be that Art assessed him as he did the others, speculating whether they could last the long haul. Men of talent, Art knew, artists who began their careers with a lively desire to help the dispossessed were too often, he had observed, lured into the life of the fleshpot when fame came their way. This young man had won laurels early, too early perhaps. He had stuff, indeed, attuned as he was to the turbulent spirit of the times, he knew what was going on, and he could get it down on paper. Maecenas would be after him, was after him, the politicos and the powerful money-bags behind them, had their ways. Would they capture this young giant, bring him down with the golden arrows? It had happened to others in his day. Could this man who had in him the gift of a Daumier resist success? Well, time would tell; he had passion, that was good; he was a fighting man, that was good. His chances for survival were not at all bad: the man had backbone, as well as the gray stuff, as well as a God-given talent.

And there was much talk of craft, of style, precisely what Bob sought, and he was exhilarated. It did him good to hear the praise of these men, and later, when he frankly asked Art for his criticism, Art gave it frankly, and Bob felt the sagacity of his judgment. It was more than worth the trip.

Bob was in fine fettle when he went up to see Mark Sullivan. Bob was an eyeful, the old editor could have thought, as he looked up to see six-foot two of young man clad in a gleaming white suit, a big wide-rimmed hat on his long, lean head, his white teeth shining behind a boyish grin. The editor of *Collier's* was a courtly gentleman of the old school, but he could not resist asking him, curiously: "I think you have Socialistic ideas, haven't you?" Bob promptly replied that he was a member of the Socialist Party which set the editor musing until he said, "Well, young man, you know what I'd like to get you to do? Go up and see Colonel Roosevelt, just get acquainted with him. That's all."

Bob knew that T.R. had just returned from his prodigious adventure hunting elephants in the African jungles and getting himself amply photographed in the process. He had afterward made a grand tour of all Europe, impressing the crowned heads sufficiently. Back home T.R. startled many in the nation with his series of political proposals which included a call for legislation to repeal the U.S. Supreme Court decisions by popular

vote—a suggestion that shook the G.O.P. like an earthquake. This did interest Bob. What were T.R.'s plans? What were his relations with the Republican Party? They had a bearing on the national life.

T.R. meant nothing much more to Bob than the fact that he was the blustering executive who condemned, as "undesirable citizens" those Bob felt were the salt of the earth: Moyer, Haywood, Pettibone, Gene Debs. But the sensational reports in the press that T.R. had changed and was now advocating "extreme socialistic measures" induced him to accept Sullivan's suggestion.

"Yahs, delighted to meet you," Roosevelt said when Bob entered his office. "Mark Sullivan just phoned you were coming." The former president wore a very loud suit of clothes and he grinned with that amazing dental exposition for which he was famous. Bob started to say that he had made many cartoons of him, but Teddy interrupted to exclaim theatrically how good it was to be home again and to see how things were going. Teddy was off on a fast track, asking questions about the Midwest's feeling for Taft, which he pronounced "Tahft," and Bob supposed that was what people meant by a Harvard accent. But before Bob could answer T.R. had sprinted on, answering his own questions, and before the interview ended Bob understood Roosevelt was going to fight Taft, for the fat, bumbling disciple of the Rough Rider had found new masters. "Yahs, I like Tahft but," T.R. said, and he spat the words out venomously, "he was better when he had somebody behind him to push him."

Back at *Collier's* office Sullivan rose from his seat nervously and asked what happened. Bob repeated the conversation expressing his conviction that T.R. would fight Taft and Sullivan looked around warily. "You understand," he said, "that you must never repeat that conversation. It must not be published or he'd call you a liar to the ends of the earth. And you'd have no come-back."

The request for silence created so unfavorable an impression on Bob that when Sullivan suggested he come on the staff, that he'd meet the *Post-Dispatch* salary and better it, Bob refused. On the *Post-Dispatch* he could say most of what he wanted to say. Charley McAdam agreed to that. He decided to return to St. Louis, for the time being, at least.

SNAPSHOT OF ROBERT MINOR AND WILLIAM Z. FOSTER AT MINOR'S HOME, CROTON-ON-HUDSON, N. Y., EARLY 1952.

BOARDMAN ROBINSON, *a drawing by Robert Minor*

As the 1912 presidential campaign unfolded, Bob drew some of his most memorable cartoons. T.R. had seceded from the GOP when the convention refused to adopt some of his liberal planks to lure the electorate, and he formed the Progressive Party with its "Square Deal" ticket. He had the backing of J. P. Morgan's Steel Trust, for its brain-trusters saw the guile of Teddy's maneuvers. The nation was restless, millions were troubled by the onrush of monopoly's power, labor was on the march. Socialist ideas were catching the ear of many. Out West the Wobblies, the Industrial Workers of the World were raising hell; the politicians knew dissent was in the air. A Princeton professor named Woodrow Wilson had made a name for himself as a liberal, had a gift for demagogy himself, spoke ardently of "the New Freedom" and the need to bridle the trusts. T.R. was prepared to out-Wilson Wilson. He stumped the country promising the earth and the moon: social and industrial justice, the abolition of poverty, state control over the trusts.

An appreciative audience greeted Bob's cartoon depicting Teddy, clad in his Rough Rider uniform, cartridge belt and leggings, his famous teeth grinning, stretching out his hand and shouting "Dee-lighted" to greet a professorial, bearded man with a book under his arm named *Das Kapital,* the figure labeled Karl Marx, of course. And around Teddy stood a group of assenting capitalists who included J. P. Morgan.

Wilson triumphed even though Roosevelt's whirlwind demagogy, which actually borrowed planks from the Socialists, won him four million votes. But Bob had cause for elation over the showing of the Socialist Party. Eugene Debs, in this day before women had the vote, received almost a million ballots, the largest in his party's history. The idea of an economic setup controlled by workingmen was making headway in the richest country of the world. The election campaign was noted across the world, for Lenin, in far-away Russia, saw the significance of the election as "an unusually clear and striking manifestation of bourgeois reformism as a means of struggle against Socialism." Roosevelt, he wrote, was clearly the man "the clever billionaires" chose "to preach this fraud." And Bob, who had never heard the name of Lenin, put into a cartoon virtually the essence of Lenin's analysis.

Bob thrilled to see his party, scorned and reviled as it was in high places, come so grandly to the fore. The Socialists

elected more than a thousand local officials to office—judges, state assemblymen, aldermen, school board members, and the mayors of fifty-six cities and towns. The circulation of the chief Socialist paper, *The Appeal to Reason,* a weekly, rose to over a million circulation during special campaigns. And the party had hundreds of additional publications. Bob exulted, sensing the mood and the motion of the people.

But the young giant of the cartoon could no longer remain in his vantage point on the Mississippi. Pulitzer's *World* in New York invited him to Manhattan. Ralph Pulitzer offered Bob the job with the air of a king conferring a grand duchy upon a commoner. He would have for his realm a quarter-page space on the regal editorial page, seven cartoons a week, a big research department at his beck and call, plus a salary surpassing that of any cartoonist in the land. A coveted plum. Yet Bob was loathe to pluck it. He did not want the job and the younger Pultizer sat across the table studying this odd duck who was his cartoonist. What ailed him? Any other man would have jumped at the offer. Bob said, finally, that he wanted to go abroad to learn, that he had never really studied art. If possible he would go to Paris, the mecca of all artists. Ralph Pulitzer, his father's son, had the elder's supple sagacity to know when to bend. He knew the other newspapers would eagerly grab for Bob if he cut loose from his paper. Pulitzer leaned across the table. "If that's what it is," he laughed, "go to Paris!" He offered Bob a year's leave, a substantial advance on his future salary, so long as Bob agreed to return to the *World.* It was no offer to scorn and a few days later Bob was aboard a steamer for France.

Paris was what Paris has been to thousands of gifted young Americans: a city of unearthly beauty, fascinating to the eye as to the mind. Its turbulent freedom of ideas exhilarated him; the provincial marveled at the cosmopolitan quality of its inhabitants.

He sat on the boulevards watching the passers-by, the smart women and the polished men, and he walked the long, dim streets of the poor, the squalid industrial suburbs, listening to the talk, responding in the halting French he studied at nights in his hotel room, searching for the ideas, the mind, the hearts of these people.

—St. Louis *Post-Dispatch*, 1911

Study was a different matter. He enrolled in the classes of the Julian Academy, sat with the eager bevy of young men and women, listening to the professors. But in no time he was disillusioned. Why, these old men taught something that was dryer than dust! Their academicism violated him, their rigorous adherence to rules he felt were outmoded choked him. This could not be the code that governed those he came to revere, the masters from Michelangelo's time on; especially, and above all, Goya and Daumier and Delacroix whom he found endlessly inspiring. He sat hours before Delacroix' paintings, his Sack of Constantinople, the tragedy limned in a majestic starkness of light and shade, of motion and drama; Delacroix' vast canvas bigger than a wall which told of a ship that had gone down in the Mediterranean, the humans on a raft, the stormy seas, the men in the water's white churn; the action, the drama, the passion of life was for him; not the cold, immobile, frozen—and respectable—lineaments of being. Daumier! Who could improve on his sense of life's illimitable struggle, the snivelling bourgeois, the haggard workingmen, the old combat between the two. This was reality, for life, as Bob saw it, was an incessant struggle between being and dying, something coming into existence, something going out of it. Motion was an eternal law of life, men lived in an eternal swirl; he had been in that all his years, was some part of it, and *that* he wanted to get down on canvas. That, for him, was art.

He stayed long enough at Julian's, two, three months, to illustrate, characteristically, that he could have painted as the academicians would have wanted him to paint, could master what they taught, and he wanted them to know that before he was through with them. And that he did. Then the rest of his journey to Paris was his own. He studied that of art he wanted, which satisfied him, and then he was gone from the studios.

From the studios, but not from the streets, the sacred streets of the slums. He knew best the part of town where the railroad yards lay and he sketched the railroadmen in their caps and blouses and scarves and he listened to their animated talk, noting that many were adherents of anarcho-syndicalism which alone, they said, was to be the salvation of the working class. They professed too, to be Socialists, and he pondered their distinctions. They believed that the state, its form and disciplines, even when it was a state run by working people, was a

source of evil. It choked the freedom of men, and they would have none of that. The state was the repository of the bourgeois ideas and way of life. The trade union, *camarade,* there was the form for the future. Possibly, he came to think; for he was now not of one mind regarding his own Socialist persuasion.

Misgivings had arisen in him concerning the course of his party, something was askew in its upper councils, he felt. He did not agree with the conclusions its right-wingers had drawn from the 1912 presidential campaign who regarded the reformist planks the Republican millionaires offered, via Theodore Roosevelt, as a sign of "progressive capitalism." Nor did he agree with the expulsion of Big Bill Haywood from the party. That shocked him. Haywood had been his hero when Bob first came into the Socialist movement in 1907; the fighting metal miner who had become secretary-treasurer of the Western Federation of Miners in 1901 gained enormous prestige during his trial in 1907. He was a fighting man who took on all comers that he recognized as enemies of his class. Together with Eugene Debs, Mother Mary Jones and other radical unionists and left-wing Socialists he had founded the I.W.W., the Industrial Workers of the World, and the early record of the Wobblies was inspiring: it advanced the cause of industrial unionism, brought a message of fighting hope to the distant, isolated beleagered workers of the West; it won outstanding recruits in the East, like Elizabeth Gurley Flynn. It was formed in rebellion to the treachery of Gompers' style of craft unionism, to the corruption that had set in among the AFL bureaucracy, to the opportunism of the Socialist right-wing leaders. All this, to the good, attracted Bob. What he did not see, he wrote years later, was the profoundly erroneous rejection by the I.W.W. of electoral activity, its dual unionism, its sectarianism which became its besetting sin. No few others in America made the same mistake at the time.

It was natural for him, then, to listen sympathetically to his friends among the French anarcho-syndicalists. Did they have a better way of reaching Socialism? Actually, Bob at the time had only a sketchy acquaintance with the scientific principles of Marxism, and he came to lean toward the ideas he heard in Paris.

One thing he learned, the men and women of the Parisian

working class had an abiding hatred for war. That suited him. It was 1913: the horror of World War hung over the continent during his stay and he listened to the arguments against war he heard here in all their Gallic passion. If war broke out it would be a gory conflict for markets, a big business fight in which the poor would bleed and die by the millions, and the Bourse would revel as the quotations leaped. He returned home after ten months, his mind aswirl.

"Your Honor, this woman gave birth to a naked child!"
—*The Masses,* 1915

Study War No More

HOME AGAIN and a nation was hungry. Nineteen Thirteen seemed to be Nineteen Seven all over again: this accursed capitalism threw the thunderbolts of depression at the working class once every decade it seemed. Men were hungry, thousands starved, the gray breadlines stretched across the continent once again. As Bob walked in from the downtown piers he saw ragged men sitting on the park benches of the battery, where they had doubtlessly slept. He stopped on a street corner and listened to men like these; and after a few days home he read of the unemployed marching into churches, like St. Patrick's Cathedral, to take a night's shelter. And the police thwacked away with their nightsticks, cracking skulls as though the thud of hickory could overwhelm the mind's dissidence.

Bob was scarcely home when World War I exploded in Europe. He was enormously happy that he was here, able, every day to toss his lance against the mongers of war. For Pulitzer's paper had supported Woodrow Wilson, and the glittering Knight of the New Freedom declared his horror of the booming cannon across the water. He would have none of that slaughter, and his promise endeared him to the people of the land. The *World* promptly adopted an editorial position against the conflict, and it gave Bob free rein. Day after day the quarter of a page that was his platform carried, in unforgettable line, his passionate indictment. It was a banker's war and he said so; it was a war in which we should have no part. The great white and black of his drawings teemed with the figures of men, of great men and great masses, opposing the little fleshy men and their lethal greed. The response to Bob's drawings was sensational; letters came by the baleful, endorsing Bob's views and congratulating the *World* upon this artist who could express the sacred sentiments of its readers. He was unquestionably one of the most favored of all the country's cartoonists, Boardman Rob-

O WICKED FLESH!

—*The Masses*, 1915

inson, Art Young, and he, a man of peace and a genius at its expression: a man to reckon with.

The months passed and one day, nearly a year later, Horatio Seymour, a leading editor of the paper, called Bob into his office. The pale eyes of the editor shifted from Bob's face, to the window overlooking the East River, and back again to Bob. He fiddled with his pen on the glasstop desk. History, he said, warily, moved on. What was right one day could be wrong another. The Germans had become the primary danger in the world. The Kaiser showed no glimmer of humanity, no adherence to the rules of civilization. What was happening in Belgium, the atrocities, were authentic, believe me, Bob. "We have official assurance." The U-boats were sinking ships indiscriminately. *Schrecklichkeit* was trying to conquer the world. We too would be the victims of the boot-jacked, goose-stepping gray legions unless we came to the aid of those who were victims today. That meant, and he hesitated, his eyes flickered to Bob's and away, that meant that the kind of cartoons Bob was drawing must change. We would have to prepare the American people gradually for intervention against the Kaiser. A war to end war, a war for democracy, the haloed professor in the White House was to say not long hence. Unsaid was the fact that J. P. Morgan was the banking agent for the Allies, had billions invested with the enemies of the Central Powers, and, by God, J. P. Morgan was going to guarantee those investments.

Seymour stopped talking and he shifted his pen from one hand to the other. There was a dead silence in the room. "No, Seymour, I can't go along with that," Bob said finally. "It is what I have been saying, what the paper has been saying. It's a rich man's war and a poor man's fight, Seymour, and you know that as well as I do. This is a war in which the governments of both sides are in the wrong. I'll burn in hell before I'll consent to be a party to this war."

Seymour's pallor deepened as he controlled himself. "Think it over, Bob," he said. "It could be you are wrong."

"It could be I am wrong on a lot of things," Bob roared, making for the door, "But I know damned well I'm not wrong on that."

No, there was no need to think it over. The *World* waited for Bob, and he was silent. The editors did not fire him, or terminate his contract. They simply put him on ice, as Park Row said.

He was to be left dangling, between the heaven of his daily quarter page and the gehenna of silence.

Bob could not brook gehenna long, even though his paycheck came through every week. Silence was not for him. He would find a way to break the contract so that he would be free to work wherever he wanted and without paying the legal penalties of breaking a contract. He sat down one night and drew a cartoon for *Mother Earth,* a little anarchist magazine.

This was the heyday of Billy Sunday, the hell-fire, rootin'-tootin' evangelist who despised labor and had invoked God's wrath upon strikes. Bob's cartoon showed Billy Sunday pulling an unwilling Jesus into a furious tango. Though Bob's fire was focussed on the religious demagogue, many interpreted it as blasphemy. Someone clipped the cartoon, enclosed it in an envelope to the *World,* and asked, in a horrified sentence, "Is this your Bob Minor?" The editors promptly terminated the contract and Bob was free.

He immediately became the political cartoonist for *The Call,* a New York Socialist daily newspaper which had a wide influence, was a power then in the working class of the city and in the nation. He resumed his cartoons assailing the war, and the flood of letters now began to come to the working class newspaper.

The Texan had grown: a studio could not contain him. He must go to the center of the world, this year of 1915, and stand there himself, at the vortex in Europe. John Reed whom he met at Art Young's, was there; Boardman Robinson, the artist, whose work Bob admired, was there, with Reed. Together they roamed the Eastern front, among the Serbs, the Austrians, and later the Russians, describing, by word and picture, the mud and blood and vermin of war. He must go, too, and Bob persuaded the editors of *The Call* to let him go to Europe as a war artist. *The Call* was too poor to stand the expenses and Bob went down to the Newspaper Enterprise Association and got a contract from them that would foot the bill.

Aboard ship silent Europeans were returning to go into the army and on his third day out as Bob sat on deck, vaguely wondering about U-boats, a drunken young Frenchman, a draftee, came toward him. The Frenchman was a big man and Bob noticed him approaching, wondering how a man felt going home to fight in a war. Bob started when he saw the drunk

climb over the railing, and he leaped from his deck chair toward the man. The young conscript leaned out over the ocean, backward, holding the rail and he smiled at this big American who was pleading with him from the other side. Bob reached out to grab the Frenchman but as he did the drunk cunningly grabbed Bob's wrists. Bob continued talking softly in the broken French he knew, inviting the conscript to accompany him down to the bar for a few more cognacs and talk to the pretty women there. *"Non, non,"* the Frenchman said, "It is nicer where I am going. And you, M'sieu," he said pleasantly, "you are such a nice fellow, you must come with me." Bob spoke again with all the persuasiveness he had. The draftee shook his head, laughing delightedly, *non, non, non,* it was far better where he was going, and the American must go with him. Bob braced himself to make a grab and haul the man across the rail when at that moment the conscript pushed himself out of Bob's grasp, and smiling and waving good-bye, he slid gently down the ship's side to the sea, disappearing instantly in the dark. Bob ran down the deck shouting "Man overboard!"; the captain turned the ship around once but the man was gone.

The next day Bob wrote the episode up and sent the story home, his first piece of writing. The story got a big play in the syndicated columns of the N.E.A. that began his career as a writer.

War was what he expected. He sent back scores of sketches and articles; one describing a hospital train in from the front-line trenches could never be forgotten. It was printed in a score of Scripps newspapers across the country and Americans saw, through his words and his drawings, the Poilus, bearded, hollow-eyed, lying on the station platform, some babbling mildly, others silent, their arms and legs amputated. He described how it felt when he helped lift and carry a young French soldier who had lost both arms and both legs. Other dispatches described the dismal chaos of the home front and his trip into Italy where he saw the same madness on the other side of the Alps. His words had a ferocious bite and his drawings a quality of Goya; great dark skies, the gleaming white at the cannon's mouth as it roared, the sad grays of the mud in the trenches. And above all, the grim and bewildered faces of the soldiers. All the hate there was in him was in his drawings and in his words. He remained at the front about six months.

He was back at his drawing board in the office of the New York *Call* sketching his daily cartoon when he read a story that said the United States Army, under General John J. Pershing, was about to attack Mexico. He was instantly convinced that such a military attack would begin the long expected imperialist adventure to the south of the Rio Grande, the latter-day rape of Mexico, its reduction to a colony of Wall Street, to be exploited by Standard Oil and other corporations.

He was up on his long legs proposing again to *The Call's* editors that they treat the impending military incursion as the possible beginning of an imperialist crusade and he urged them to send him to Mexico as a war correspondent.

The editors agreed again and volunteered to persuade the Newspaper Enterprise Association to give him credentials on the same basis it had for his European trip. Their string of news-

papers would have the right to use what they wanted of his work. The N.E.A. would bear the expense, for *The Call* could not. While waiting for the N.E.A.'s decision Bob continued to draw his daily cartoon and, in his custom latterly, to snatch an hour or two for a game of tennis in Central Park. He sat drawing a cartoon when a telegram arrived from Cleveland, the NEA head office, saying that shooting had begun on the Mexican-Arizona border, the proposal was accepted and would he catch the next train to El Paso where his credentials as war correspondent with the U.S. Army were waiting. Minus coat or hat, in tennis pants and sneakers, he ran for the train and just made it.

After a very little shooting, this war which Hearst was cooking up, as he had done a generation before, in Cuba, failed to pan out. Bigger men in Washington or Wall Street had other plans. So Bob slid off the big white horse he rode as a correspondent attached to a regiment of Negro cavalry at the Mexican border, doffed his uniform, got back into his tennis pants and sneakers. He decided to visit friends in Los Angeles before returning to New York.

In Los Angeles, a guest at Upton Sinclair's, Bob received a wire from San Francisco. It was signed by Lydia Gibson, a young woman whose name Bob knew as a gifted poet and artist on the *Masses*. The telegram said an AFL trade unionist by the name of Tom Mooney and four others were being framed on charges

that would mean the noose for them as a result of the explosion during the Preparedness Day parade, July 22, 1916, in San Francisco. (Such demonstrations were officially mounted throughout the country in preparation for entry into the war.) Ten had been killed, forty injured, when the bomb went off after the parade had started. The authorities and the newspapers were whipping up a frenzy in the Bay area, blaming the disaster on labor so that the employers could institute the Open Shop to smash the region's trade unions.

Would Bob come to San Francisco and discuss the case, the wire asked. They wanted him to take charge. Could he come immediately? Bob stuffed the wire in the pocket of his pants, the same tennis pants he wore when he ran from *The Call* offices to make the train for Mexico.

He caught the boat to San Francisco at midnight.

Winner of a Lost Cause

Bob, as he stepped off the ferry gangplank into the sunlight of San Francisco in August felt that he stood in the most beautiful city he had ever seen. Not even Paris surpassed this. His artist's eye reveled in the vision of the bright, steepled city that climbed its hills and circled the flashing bay, looking out into the serene Pacific. He knew enough about the city to savor its cosmopolitan nature, this port that faced the Orient. And he knew something of the boiling corruption of its municipal politics, no secret certainly in that time of journalists like Lincoln Steffens and Charles Edward Russell whom Teddy Roosevelt had, in majestic exasperation, dubbed "the muckrakers."

He took a street car to his friends on Dolores Street, a creaky old car that trundled him into his future. He knocked on the door of Eleanor Fitzgerald's apartment and a woman with wild Irish red hair and a fine face greeted him. She recognized Bob from his photographs in the labor press, *The Call,* the old *Masses, Mother Earth.* Several trade unionists were awaiting him in the little parlor and they got down to business without ceremony.

They had fastened on him as the man to bring the case to the public because they knew his reputation as artist, journalist, adherent of Socialism. He had standing in the newspapers and they thought his voice would carry in the editorial sanctums, perhaps more than any other they knew. This was a tough job. Bob, they said, have no illusions. The powers were determined to smash the unions as the nation was steered, pell-mell, toward a world war. Preparedness Day was unmistakable. Its bloody events forecast the future. The men behind the scenes had clearly determined that now was the time to annihilate the labor movement in the Bay cities. Labor, in all America, in the world, had a big stake here. This would be a tough, up-

hill fight that would test every fiber in him their words said implicitly as they studied his face. Bob replied that he was not unaware of the stakes and he began to ask questions. What kind of men were the five who were arrested? "Strong men, strong as iron," Eleanor Fitzgerald whom the others called Fitzy, replied. "The strongest is Tom Mooney."

Mooney was a seasoned leader up from the ranks, "no pie-card artist," plain, hard-fisted, idealistic, "totally devoted" to Labor. He was prominent in Molders' Local 164 of the AFL, as prominent there as the second defendant, Ed Nolan, was in the International Association of Machinists, Lodge 68. Both had been members of the San Francisco Labor Council. Tom had just been through a turbulent strike as an organizer for the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees. The strike was against the United Railways, that company of merciless capitalists who were at the core of corporation rule and political corruption. The strike had taken place but a week before the Preparedness Day disaster.

The three others in jail were of similar calibre: Tom's wife, Rena, who shared his life and his views, Israel Weinberg, a good solid man who had organized the jitney drivers, and Warren K. Billings, the kid of the lot, veteran of labor at 21 who had already served time for leading strikes in the shoe industry. He and Weinberg had rejected bribes of $5,000 each to help frame Mooney. These were the five.

A month before two thousand of the city's industrialists assembled to hear strategy on the way to break the unions and force an open shop on labor. Captain Robert Dollar, the shipping magnate, said the way to start was simple: "Send several ambulance loads of union men to the hospital." The blood-call for force and violence stirred his audience. The meeting voted to raise a million dollars to rid San Francisco of unions. The vigilante Law and Order Committee of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce was born. The assembly decided on a day for a giant mobilization of their strength. Call it Preparedness Day, "a fine, patriotic name," Captain Dollar said; nobody could oppose that. It would go over with the public. Sure fire.

Okay, that's the way it was with capital, how about organized labor, Bob asked. "Who can we count on?" The picture they drew was dismal. Most of the leaders had been sucked into a

whirlpool of corruption. Lucrative municipal jobs bought them off. The men around Fitzy's table described a labor bureaucracy that was incorporated into the state apparatus as judges, prosecutors, mayors, clerks of court, flunkies of the employers, flunkies with union cards they had gotten in some dim past. They cooperated with the underworld and they acted as hangmen of the labor movement, broke strikes, were stool pigeons, even wielded guns against honest unionists. They had sabotaged the recent street car strike Mooney led. The corrupted labor aristocracy hated Mooney because he would not play their game. By midnight it was clear to Bob. Yes, it would be rough.

The next evening an extraordinary meeting was held in a tailor shop owned by David Milder. A dozen men sat around the table as the tailor went about the room pulling down the window shades, talking in subdued voices. Most were fairly prominent in AFL locals throughout the city. Several were Mexican-Americans, all were tested men. A council of strategy of a mere dozen that would have made old Captain Dollar laugh. He would have roared when they summed up their financial resources. The twelve could scrape together no more than $200 to obtain legal aid for the arrested prisoners. Bob promptly dug into his pockets for $200 more. He had arrived with $300 paid him by the Newspaper Enterprise Association. The rest he needed to buy a suit of clothes; he still wore the tennis pants and alpaca coat he had on in New York when he made that dash for the train to Mexico. He had to find a room, too.

Bob asked about the newspapers. Well, there were a few small labor and Socialist papers whose editors should be seen. And the other newspapers? What about the San Francisco *Bulletin*? It was respected throughout the nation among liberals for its crusade against municipal corruption five years before when it put the crooked politician Abe Ruef in jail and almost got the president of United Railways. Its editor, Fremont Older, a student of Tolstoy and Veblen, was considered a two-fisted liberal. Yet, the men said, his paper fulminated against the "dynamiters," Mooney and the others, with a vehemence equaling the others.

Bob suggested that he go see Older to ascertain why he regarded Mooney guilty. The others held out little hope. "He's

against us now," they said, "scared as hell. But see what you can do."

Bob visited Older's office without pre-arrangement and was immediately taken to his room. To Bob's surprise Lincoln Steffens was sitting by a window, a small, immaculate man, whose eye-glasses, goatee and measured speech seemed to Bob the literary man in prototype. This was the man whose exposés of political corruption had made him famous, one of the nation's best-known journalists, one of those whose barbed articles and books had earned the hatred of Teddy Roosevelt who dubbed them "the muckrakers." Both men greeted Bob gruffly and he sat down, uninvited. He thought he detected a controlled cordiality in Steffens' eyes which reflected, perhaps, their earlier acquaintance in New York when Bob was on the *World.* But neither Older nor Steffens smiled. The three sat looking at each other. "Well, Minor, what do you think about it?" Older asked finally.

"I feel," Bob replied smiling, "that this reception is as cold as ice frozen through to the bottom of the sea." The others smiled faintly. Bob seized the moment to attack. "They think," he said, "they are going to have a hanging, first of Mooney, then of Mooney's immediate friends, then of the trade unions and then of everything else in California that doesn't kneel to them."

"And what are you going to do about it?" Older demanded.

"Work like hell and line up the unions is what we are going to do, and stop the hanging of Mooney and his friends."

Older laughed. "So! You think you're going to line up labor, huh? Labor will preside at the hanging." Did Bob know that the secretary of the San Francisco Labor Council spends his days in the District Attorney's office? "All the unions are that way. They want Mooney hung, and Nolan too, the whole damn outfit." He predicted Bob would get nobody to stand for Mooney, except possibly Selig Schulberg and a few of his cooks and waiters and a handful of Ed Nolan's machinists. "Mooney's going to hang, don't kid yourself."

"Mooney did not do that thing," Bob replied.

"No, Minor, don't kid yourself. They've got the right man."

"No. Older, they have not got the right man. These men did not have anything to do with the bomb affair. I've seen the evidence. It's a frame-up. These are the 'right men' only in

the sense that they were the organizers of the United Railways strike; they are the 'right men' for the Chamber of Commerce to hang in the open shop war, but they are not the men who set off the Preparedness Parade bomb."

Steffens who had been sitting like a little goateed sphinx spoke up.

"Oh, you say they are innocent? Not guilty? All right. That let's us out. We are trying to do something for guilty people. Your people are innocent. Fine! They don't need our help. We'll try to do something else while you save Mooney."

That was the way things stacked up those first days.

Back at the office of the defense committee in the Rush Building Bob pondered this meeting. It was sure not encouraging. He shrugged his shoulders. "Well, that's the way it begins." He rose and moved around, flailing his arms as though to ward off any possible mood of discouragement. He thought of the crusade to free Moyer and Haywood and Pettibone, back in 1907. Well, that case showed how these things started. The same way. Labor was slow in starting, but it got started. Then it picked up momentum. Meetings, leaflets by the millions, a dogged fight in the courts, all these things, then the resolutions began to come from the trade unions, there were bigger meetings, more newspaper accounts, more unions began to move, liberals began to stir, the middle class began to understand, the tide of public opinion rose; then there was a break in the courts when Harry Orchard, the Pinkerton crumbled, and finally the miners walked out of prison, free men. By God, that's the way it's going to be here, he said to himself, pacing the room as though it were a prison cell.

And, as though his will-to-win conjured up response, individual trade unionists began coming into the defense office, one by one at first, then in groups. Soon they were pulling in from all of the four industrial cities of the Bay. Splendid men. The machinists, Ed Nolan's union, were the first to come, then the moulders from Tom Mooney's union, who had walked the picketlines with the defendants. Mostly they were of the solid "old-timer" set; Weinberg's jitney-bus friends, a couple of giants from the pile drivers, and a big surge of the cocky waiters and cooks who would go through hell any day with Selig Schulberg, their leader.

After a week Bob felt he had known Mooney all his life.

He learned all there was to know. Tom's father was an American-born coal miner, his mother an Irish girl from County Mayo. His childhood he spent in a construction camp of laborers who worked on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. Tom's earliest memory was the sight of his father shooting it out with a scab at the mine pit who had wounded his father in the leg. When Tom was 13 he left school for work in an iron foundry, apprentice to the core maker's trade. In 1902 he joined the International Core Makers Union which was absorbed in the International Moulders Union. Two years later Tom found steady work in a San Francisco foundry. By now he was an eager, restless youngster, agog with the world and avidly curious to see it. In 1907 he and another young man spent their savings on a steerage round trip to Europe. In Rotterdam, Holland, at an art gallery studying a huge painting by Rembrandt, a guide book in his hand, a stranger noticed the union button in Tom's lapel, and introduced himself. The man was a Socialist. They began a conversation that continued for forty-eight hours with time off only to catch a wink of sleep. It was a turning point in Tom's life, and Tom became a Socialist. He met Gene Debs in 1908 when the Socialist leader came west on a swing around the country on a chartered train called the Red Special. He sold literature for old Gene's campaign.

Twenty-five years old now, and an ardent Socialist, Tom brought many members of his union into the Socialist Party. In 1912 he was elected a delegate by the Moulders to attend the union's convention in Milwaukee, and here he met a tall young railroadman, a member of the Carmen's Union whose name was William Z. Foster. They found much in common. So Tom was a seasoned fighter, a dauntless, glowing man on the picket-line whose courage and flaming zeal inspired others. He was a good man to defend.

In the shabby room of his boarding house, Bob stayed up until the dawn hours studying the vast sheafs of clippings that he spread across the rickety bed and on the floor, cataloguing them, making endless notes. From them and from the reports of the eager trade unionists of the embryo defense committee, and from stray individuals from various walks of life who had the "facts," bringing them into the office of evenings, or sending messages through third parties, Bob gleaned a working understanding of the facts behind the case.

First, the facts about the Preparedness Day parade. He had to know everything that could be known, all the circumstances, the people involved, the exact time, what the newspapers said, what labor felt and said. He scrutinized every tidbit of fact about the event.

The newspapers had prophesied that a quarter million would parade. Actually no more than 17,000 showed up. Society women led them. Significantly enough it was Thornwell Mullally, an executive of United Railways, who headed the parade. Mayor Rolph marched a few blocks behind the headmen.

The marchers started up Market Street from the Embarcadero, on the waterfront, at 1:30 P.M. The explosion was at 2:06 P.M., at Steuart Street, just off Market. Six bystanders and paraders were instantly killed, four died later, forty were injured. Some spectators reported they had seen dark objects hurtling down on the paraders from above, and then there was the explosion. District Attorney Charles M. Fickert ignored these statements and promptly trumpeted to the press that eyewitnesses saw Mooney and Billings place a suitcase at the scene of the explosion.

Bob checked and double-checked the whereabouts of Mooney and Billings in these moments.

Billings was visiting friends at the other end of town. Tom and Rena Mooney watched the parade from the roof of the Eilers Building more than a mile and a half from the Embarcadero where the parade formed. The disaster occurred a block from the Embarcadero.

The frame-up was carefully conceived and executed according to plan. Bob learned that Fickert was calling his flunky labor leaders to his office, laying down the law. Stay off Mooney's defense! Fickert got easy compliance to that. And Bob learned, through intermediaries, that the D.A. sent word to Fremont Older, an old enemy of his, to stay out of this one, or else. Bob wondered what Fickert could have on the liberal, or possibly, the liberal's boss. It could be anything. Yes, it was clear that the Law and Order Committee was sparing nobody. The Open Shop war had been declared and it was war to the death.

The judges obediently fell into step: Billings' trial was hastily set, a few days off. Nine charges of murder were raised against Billings and Mooney. The wheels ground so fast in these ordinarily sluggish courts that there had been no time to get law-

PITTSBURGH

—*The Masses*, 1916

yers for the defendants. The court appointed several legal hangers-on to represent the arrested.

Maxwell McNutt, an eminent San Francisco lawyer known as a straight-shooter, volunteered his services. The defendants accepted him. Later, Bourke Cockran, a famous orator and prominent criminal lawyer of New York, volunteered and was accepted.

And oh, the newspapers! They were at Fickert's beck, loyally headlined his call for witnesses. The underworld, and the half-world stirred eagerly. Hundreds of voluntary witnesses tumbled past each other to identify Mooney as the guilty man. And how the press beat the war drums: "RING OF FIVE DYNAMITERS FORMED PLOT FOR OUTRAGE," Bob read. "MOONEY, STRIKE WAR LEADER: TRIED IN DYNAMITE CONSPIRACY." Fickert's voice echoed through the columns. "The evidence against them is conclusive," he said, the newspapers trumpeting his words. "They are the direct actors." The newspapers seemed to be saying to all and sundry, come collect the big money rewards Fickert was advertising and the avarice of the money-hungry was stimulated. It was easy for Fickert to select eight of the hundreds of squalid characters who pressed forward as the state's witnesses for the Billings case. He was first to be tried.

Bob and his companions sat in his little office considering the names of the witnesses. Who were they? What manner of men and women? What did the state have on them? Or were they solely inspired by the handsome rewards? They had to be investigated, obviously, but how? Money trickling in for the defense was a pittance compared with the need. Trained investigators should be hired, but with what? What about using volunteers? The most trusted unionists were summoned, and they went out, eagerly, an inspired crew of amateurs who knew they had to work fast before the authorities sprung the gallows trap on the defendants.

The first of the state's witnesses at Billings' trial was a blowsy, faintly pretty, young woman named Estelle Smith whom the newspapers described as a "society" girl. She testified that she saw Billings climb to the roof of a building at 721 Market Street carrying a suitcase which later was transported, in Weinberg's jitney car, Mooney inside, to the scene of the explosion.

Bob's investigators returned with the goods after indefatigable work in which they talked to hundreds of men and women,

traced leads, made their contacts. Bob roared when he read the reports: Estelle Smith was a former inmate of a house of prostitution in Los Angeles and had left the city of the Angels under indictment for murder. In San Francisco she was wandering the streets seeking employment at her trade, but she did not know the ropes here. Disconsolate, tormented by the need for the drugs to which she was addicted, she took the Sausalito Ferry intending to commit suicide. A San Francisco dentist, whose office and living quarters were at 721 Market Street, met her, heard her story, and took her to his home. She was to work for him as a dental assistant and he would supply her with the drugs she had to have. One witness.

Estelle had struck pay dirt. She sent for her mother, a Mrs. Kidwell, who came to live at 721 Market too. Mrs. Kidwell brought her love, Louis Rominger, a small-time private detective of Spokane, who helped console her while Mrs. Kidwell served time in the penitentiary for forging checks. The dentist's fantastic retinue lost no time in claiming Fickert's rewards and he welcomed them. His kind of people. Things looked up so well for Mrs. Kidwell that she wrote her convict husband not to worry, life was improving, a big politician would see to it he would soon go free. The letter came to Bob's hands. Two more witnesses.

Others: Mrs. Mellie Edeau and her maiden daughter Sadie. Mrs. Edeau was a seamstress with a penchant for sending people to prison. A man, Robert Stout, who worked in her shop, sought Bob out, nervously, and told him that he did not want to see honest and innocent men framed. He had talked with Mrs. Edeau who confided to him that she would make a "good witness," that she had already sent three men to the penitentiary. Stout told her it was "mean of her" to identify people unless she was positive of their identity. "What difference does it make," the woman replied. "They are only working men. There are too many working people in the world." Stout, the worker, was shocked. "I think you would hang a man for forty cents," he retorted. And Mrs. Edeau shrugged her shoulders, "What difference does it make as long as you get paid for it."

To defense attorney Maxwell McNutt, the prosecution's case seemed hopelessly damaged when he flung these facts before the jury. And not only these. There was the utterly fantastic and nightmarish quality to the evidence the Edeau women

gave, mother and daughter, telling contradictory stories. How could they have seen, at the same time, Billings at Steuart and Market, and Mooney at 721 Market, more than a mile apart, as they had testified. Mrs. Edeau explained blandly that they were spiritualists and that they were present at Steuart Street "in their astral bodies." And then there was that other witness, John McDonald, the former circus acrobat and now a vagrant. As he sat on the stand during Billings' trial. Bob noticed that the man's wrist went up to his nose in a gesture he remembered from somewhere. Searching his memory he found it. This gesture was that of the dope addict whose picture he had drawn on an assignment from his St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* days. Bob watched the man carefully and jotted down his careful tabulations. When the trial closed there were three versions among the witnesses of Billings' whereabouts at the moment of the explosion.

And yet, when the jury filed back into the room at the trial's close the verdict was guilty. Clearly the powers were determined to get their man. Everything was greased to that end. It would be a miracle to get a just verdict under these circumstances! But miracles do happen. True, endless sweat and labor and foresight combined to make them happen, and the young man with the hot eye and the lean jaw that jutted more prominently from his face these days, was determined to make miracles happen. There was in him that indomitable will to refuse to accept the inevitable, or what some fainter spirits might say was the inevitable.

Two things were necessary and he determined that both would happen: first, the unending call to labor, to the public beyond labor, summoning them to defend the Constitution, their rights, for if these men went to the gallows, how many others might go later! Second, simultaneously, to fight in court with every conceivable resource, summon up everything of imagination, daring, make use of every loophole and build a case that could persuade even men of stone who sat in the jury box. He had no illusions about the jury, knowing there were ways and means to fix the twelve good men and true. But if evidence of such irresistible impact were presented it was possible that hand-picked jurors could not say white when the world saw black. And if the jury would *not* see it, would ignore what everybody else deemed irrefutable, then the world outside the courts, the

court of last appeal, the highest court, would see for itself. No doubt some in the community, how many none could tell, were shaken by the revelations about Fickert's witnesses: the prostitute, the spiritualists, the dope fiend. The defense must add to that, and even if the defendants were found guilty in the lower court now, the verdict could be reversed in the higher courts later. By God, you could not say die!

He grew thin with his labors, forgot the hours of the day and of the night; showed up in court so lean and haggard that some of his friends urged him, take it easy, Bob, there is a long way to go. He snatched a meal at the home of this friend and that, munched sandwiches as he went over the evidence, the record, the reports of his trusted "under-cover" trade unionists.

One night in his lodging house, something struck him like a hammer blow. During the Billings trial Fickert released a photograph to the press showing Tom and Rena Mooney watching the parade from the rooftop of the Eilers Building, which the prosecution said depicted Mooney "in the act of ghoulishly watching the crime." But Fickert did not introduce the picture into evidence at court. It appeared only in the newspapers. Why was it not used during the trial? Strange, Bob thought. Mighty strange! The more he reflected on it the more he was certain this photograph had something in it Fickert feared. He studied the photograph with a magnifying glass, and discovered something that made his heart beat fast: in the background, he saw a street clock, about the size of a pinhead. Too small, it was, to show anything more.

Bob insisted that the defense attorneys demand the photo. But the lawyers were lackadaisical. Bob pleaded, exhorted, and finally thundered, and it was not easy to thunder when your associates were men like the famous Bourke Cockran. "We've got to see what the clock says!" Bob exclaimed. "Don't you understand this might be the key to the case?"

There was a stormy hassle before the stony-faced judge and finally Cockran was given the photograph. It was grayed, blurry, even less distinct than the newspaper reproduction Bob had in his scrapbook. He thought he detected a mocking glimpse of triumph in District Attorney Fickert's face when the negatives were handed over. If so, why? What had he done to the photo that gave him his private amusement?

Bob induced Cockran to fight for the original negative. Delay

followed delay, but finally Cockran got it and several others of the same shot taken minutes apart. Bob promptly retained the services of a handwriting and photography expert who developed the prints under guard. The man did a magnificent job. He enlarged the original negative which showed the clock the size of half a pinhead, enlarged it three thousand times its original size. The clock across the street from the building where Mooney was watching the parade came out clear and true. Bob yelled his exultant cry "Eeyah!" flinging his arms skyward, for Mooney's alibi was iron-clad. The enlargement showed Tom and Rena among a group of spectators on the roof of the Eilers Building watching the parade coming up the street from the Embarcadero, a mile and a half away. Below, on the street, you saw Mayor Rolph strutting along, past the jeweler's clock with its hand at 2:01. The other proofs showed the clock at 1:58, 2:01, 2:04. The explosion had gone off at 2:06.

The photographs were the biggest break in the trial so far.

From the viewpoint of "news" the enlarged photos and their story were sensational. But Bob knew the papers could not be trusted to play it for its worth. He decided to try Older's *Bulletin* again. He left the photos locked in the guarded safe and went down to see the old Tolstoyan. Bob sat, pale, restraining his excitement as he recounted the fight to get the photos and the exact character of the final true prints.

To his astonishment Older said, dead-pan and in a dead voice, "I don't know that there is any story to that." He refused absolutely to print the photos, but he was shame-faced about it, and Bob suddenly understood. There was more to the refusal than he could know: either the authorities had "the goods" on Older, or perhaps the owner of the *Bulletin* had handed down an absolute order not to publish anything that could help the defense. "I'm sorry," Older said softly as he walked Bob to the door.

Bob returned to his office, shaken. There he met McNutt, who was in a jubilant mood. The lawyer had always believed Mooney innocent and now he could show the world the irrefutable evidence in the great clockface. McNutt clapped Bob on the shoulder. "Cheer up," he said, "after I get through with them, Mooney will be out a free man." Bob was silent.

Bob returned to his little room, spread out all the material on the case. The floor was littered with photographs, clippings,

notebooks, and he sat down, cross-legged, began to write furiously on long sheets of legal paper. He had in mind a complete history of the case for a pamphlet that could go everywhere to everybody. He worked days and nights, the Mooney case went to the jury before the pamphlet was finished. Bob dipped into the $15 a week "salary" to pay for an engraving for one of his cartoons which he drew to illustrate the pamphlet.

He went down to the courtroom while the jury was still out, looked at the easel where the enlarged photo of the clock stood. Before the jury went into its room for deliberation, Fickert had produced a surprise witness named Frank C. Oxman, a silver-haired cattleman from Oregon who spoke with the homely drawl of the northwest and who had a smiling, open countenance. Oxman's poise and substantial appearance was in sharp contrast to the state's other witnesses, the prostitutes, the dope peddlers. The press played Oxman up as a man of substance, "worth $100,000," no fly-by-night. He "testified" precisely as Fickert wanted. He was at the explosion, he saw everything, and Mooney was the man, of course.

The jury came in: though Bob felt he knew the result, his heart turned over when a juryman, an aged man of 83, looked across the room and drew his finger across his throat. "Guilty." Mooney wa ssentenced to hang. Tom's aged mother shrieked as the foreman spoke. The judge ordered the room cleared and the policemen went to work with fists swinging.

Bob returned to his little room and completed the pamphlet he was writing. History had written his lead: "Tom Mooney is condemned to be hanged on the 17th day of May 1917, for organizing the street car employees of the United Railways of San Francisco."

"The real perpetrators of the crime have never been looked for but have practically been aided to escape by a corporation-tool district attorney who chose to use the opportunity to crush the labor enemies of his masters."

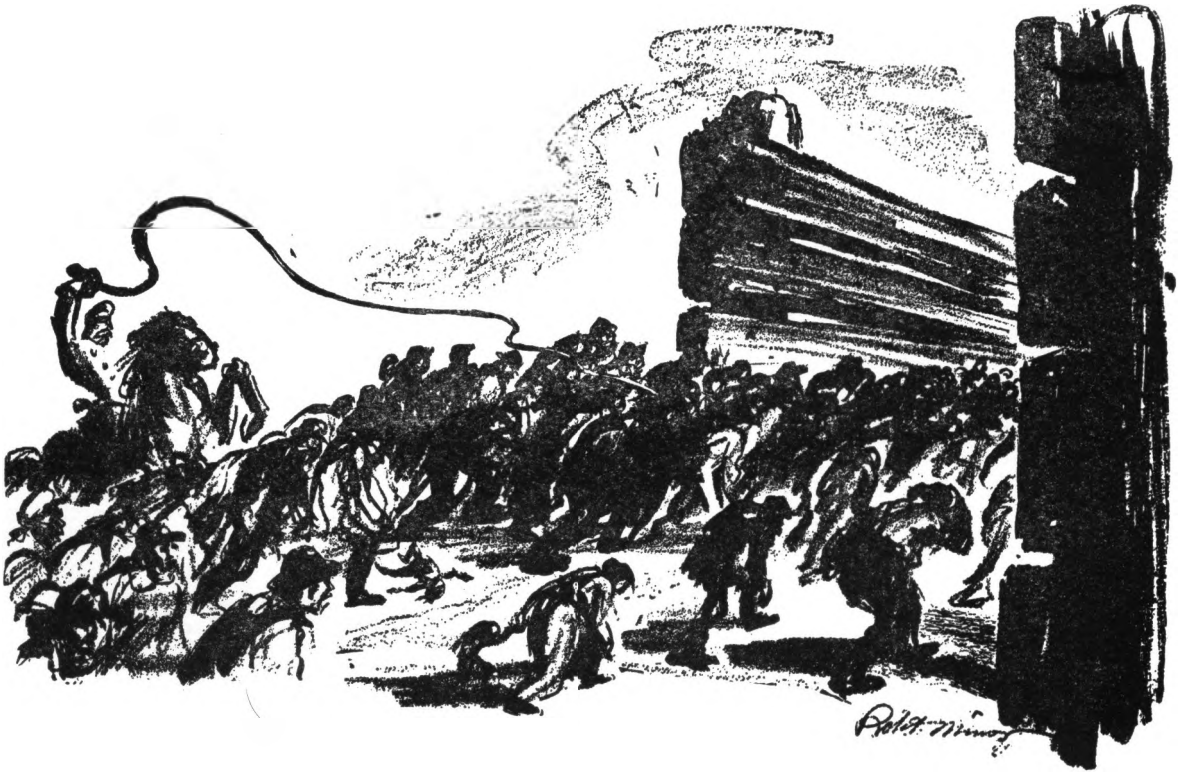
Bob called it "The Frame-Up System." It came out as a ten-cent pamphlet published by the old Workers' Defense League, and by spring a million copies had been sold. It was translated into many languages. Soldiers in the trenches of Europe read it; it went from hand to hand in a thousand cities on all the continents.

Two trials: two convictions—three more to be tried, Mrs.

Mooney, Weinberg, Nolan. Slowly, oh so slowly, Bob felt, labor had begun to move. The first big mass meeting called by the International Workers Defense League was a success even though the newspapers had boycotted all notice of it. Hugo Ernst, president of the AFL Cooks and Waiters Union had agreed to be a sponsor. The meeting at the Dreamland Rink was a mobilization of strength to answer the Preparedness Day parade. Forty-five hundred came, pushing their way through the cordons of several hundred policemen around the hall. Ernst spoke, Sara Bard Field, the poet, spoke, then Bob, who had paced nervously behind the platform. He asked for funds, saying if Mooney hanged in this infamous frame-up, the right to organize and strike would be lost.

The meeting galvanized the union men of the Bay Cities. In a few days rank-and-file unionists who had met with the Defense League challenged their locals with the facts. Joseph De War and Jack Lofthouse brought the support of the Millmen's Local of the Carpenters; Ed Nolan's Machinists Local 69 came in; the Pile Drivers, the Housesmiths, the Journeymen Horseshoers, the Riggers and Stevedores, the Carpenters, the Cooks, and the Painters. They began to oppose action taken in their name by their leaders. Soon fifty-four Bay Area AFL unions officially pledged the Defense League their support. The surge began to move across America. Tom's aged mother crusaded valiantly for her son in a hundred cities. Eugene Debs unequivocally supported Mooney; sympathetic rank-and-file Socialists began to write from all corners of the land tendering their aid and asking for instructions. The Chicago Federation of Labor led by Ed Nockels enlisted in the fight: John Fitzpatrick, president of the Chicago AFL came in with Ed Nockels. Bill Foster, Jack Johnstone, of the Chicago Packing House Union began to organize Mooney defense committes in the rest of the country. Men like Sam Hammersmark, a stalwart of Chicago labor, Jim Larkin, the Irish labor leader, J. E. Snyder, of the Oakland (Calif.) *World,* a Socialist paper, became fervid partisans of Mooney.

But not the top-flight officials of the Bay Cities labor movement, so deeply immured in the slime of the city's politics and its underworld. Nonetheless Bob invited them all. P. H. (Pee Haitch) McCarthy, president of the California Building Trades of the AFL, a small, aged man with white hair and a white



STOCKADE

—*The Liberator*

mustache, immaculately dressed, shining like a banker, rose from his enormous leather-covered swivel chair, greeted Brother Minor effusively, listened gravely to all Bob had to say, and then after twenty minutes, shook hands, expressing his gratitude that Brother Minor had come to see him. "Goodbye," he said. And that was all. Bob learned that Pee Haitch had been elected mayor of San Francisco in 1909 with the support of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the street car, gas and electric corporations and the trade unions. He had teamed up with Jerome Bassity, who operated a chain of whorehouses on the Barbary Coast that employed two hundred women and drew an income of $100,000 a year. McCarthy's administration fell in 1911 when James Rolph, Jr., was elected mayor because the big corporations wearied at the cost of the "labor" and Barbary Coast government.

That was the way things were and Bob never forgot it. You could not rely on the top-flight leaders, the job would have to be done, at least at first, by the honest men down below, at meetings, passing resolutions, pushing, pushing until they would force the Pee Haitches to budge.

But if the momentum was gathering force slowly here in the states, and Bob was certain that it was, things were moving fast abroad. Extraordinary news came from across the waters, enough to get some idea of what was brewing in the depths. Letters came enclosing clippings from labor newspapers in Britain, France, Italy, Germany. And one day, in far-away Russia, in the city called Petrograd, a demonstration of shouting workers moved before the American Embassy. "Muni, Muni, free Muni," they cried. The embassy officials huddled before the great windows, astonished. Muni? Muni? Who was that? A delegation of sailors from the Kronstadt naval base came to see David R. Francis, the American Ambassador. They handed him a petition which they said they and their *tovarischi,* their comrades, had signed, against the imprisonment of their brother-worker Muni. Francis cabled the State Department that there was an Italian named Muni who was in some kind of trouble in California.

President Wilson was informed of the Petrograd demonstration. His aides dug up the necessary information, discovered that Muni was actually Tom Mooney, no Italian, but a native-born American. This was no time for a *cause celèbre* that would

rile the horny-handed sons of toil, not with a war on our hands. Wilson wanted desperately to keep Russia in the war, and this case was nothing to fool about. He wrote the governor of California urging the commutation of Mooney's execution. The case had assumed international importance, he indicated. And that it certainly had. Bob got word that "Save Mooney" buttons were being worn on the lapels of soldiers' uniforms in the Russian, French, British and German armies.

Washington had other bad moments in this Mooney case. It threatened to get out of hand altogether. A scandal broke over Frank Oxman, the hearty cattle dealer of Oregon who had sworn away Mooney's life. The figure who had seemed such an asset to the prosecution had become infinitely embarrassing. His true story walked into Maxwell McNutt's office one day after the Mooney trial closed. A young man in shabby clothes introduced himself as the fellow who worked as a clean-up man at the Terminal Hotel. He was no more than twenty and his voice was shaky with excitement. "I seen this guy Oxman sitting at a desk scribbling and writing." The lad pulled out of his inside pocket two envelopes Oxman had crumpled and dropped into the wastepaper basket. One was addressed to Mrs. Oxman, and the other to Ed Rigall of Grayville, Illinois. When Bob read their contents he promptly telegraphed Ed Nockels out in Chicago and Nockels sped trusty investigators from the Chicago Federation of Labor to Graysville. Yes, they discovered, there was an Edward Rigall who ran a pool parlor, a sporting sort of a fellow here; this was the man. Oxman's letter asked Rigall in language that was almost illiterate, to come to San Francisco and corroborate his testimony that he had been at Steuart Street when the bomb exploded. It developed that Rigall was an old friend of Oxman's who had not been in San Francisco in fifteen years but the big-hearted "cattle dealer," actually from Illinois originally, wanted an old home-town friend to have a "free sightseeing trip" to the West, and, incidentally, to give his old buddy a hand. "You know that the silent Road," Oxman wrote Rigall, "is the one and say nuthing to any Body."

Nockels was electrified by the revelation, ran around and raised $15,000 among Chicago's unionists and bought the Oxman letters. They were presented to that reluctant dragon Fremont Older. This time, after a world had begun to move on the case, the old liberal moved. His paper had a volcanic front-page re-

production of the letters, and a flaming editorial which he wrote. On April 12, 1917, one month before Mooney was to be hanged, the Oxman letters appeared in the *Bulletin*. Fickert paled when he saw the revelations. He came, cringing now, to Older, ready to make any statement that would save his skin. The Chamber of Commerce people got wind he was faltering, ordered him to shut his damn mouth and stay put. They countered with display ads boasting that Fickert was the city's savior.

But the damage was done. Oxman was indicted for perjury, but the Law and Order people got him acquitted. Yet the authorities were obliged to retreat: Wilson's request led the judge to commute Mooney's death sentence to life imprisonment November 29, 1918. Rena Mooney was acquitted; Weinberg, and after nine months Ed Nolan walked out of jail free.

Where life was, was hope. Tom had, at least, escaped the gallows. Hard fighting would free him, some time, as the others had been freed. Him and the kid, Billings.

Bob, thirty now, had passed through the fires of an experience given to no other artist that America had produced. He had seen the workings of the courts, the state, he had looked at life raw, and what he saw was hideous. Yet his class had won, at least a partial victory. It was an experience that served him a lifetime. He was to become known as "the winner of lost causes."

Journey to the Future

It was inevitable that Bob Minor's road would wind to Moscow, to the Revolution. The concluding days of the war brought their inevitable consequences. All Europe seemed aflame and every edition's headlines bade him go. He studied John Reed's accounts of the October uprising: this was the French Revolution, only bigger. Like Bourbon Louis, the Romanov tsar was done, gone. After him, what? What was the shape of the future these Bolsheviks were constructing: was this truly the end of capitalism? The beginning of the end? Were the workingmen coming into their own? Were the Russian brothers of the molders, the machinists, the seamen, the Mooneys and the Nolans coming to the top after miserable centuries at the bottom? By God, yes, he had to be there.

He caught a steamer from New York on a bright March day of 1918, charging up the gangplank at the last moment, forearmed with six pairs of woolen socks, a heavy scarf, mittens and a new overcoat. Inside his breast pocket he carried credentials from the Philadelphia *Public Ledger* that had published his drawings and war correspondence in 1915. Into his valise he had thrown several volumes on the French Revolution which he read on the windy deck. The Mountain and the Swamp, the Jacobins, the names of Robespierre, Danton and Marat, the Incorruptible, came clearer. Now Lenin. He scarcely knew the name, had never seen a single piece the Bolshevik had written. He knew only that the tsarist press had called him "the Anti-Christ," and the American newspapers described him and his fellows as "German agents," "assassins," "fiends," "bomb-throwers," the old familiar epithets of the privileged when they feel their sway threatened.

Icicles still dripped from the eaves of the great marble governmental buildings when Bob arrived in the caiptal. The melting

snows did not presage the revolution's end. Within hours, Bob knew that the new government battled for life on a score of fronts. Massed bayonets and steel tanks of the White Guards were closing in. Bob leaped into history.

The tempo was furious. How much had happened since the strange word "Bolshevik" got universal and palpitating currency! From the lips of the Russians themselves he learned that the new government had the loyalty of the famished millions who had risen against the war which had devoured four-fifths of the nation's industrial power, and had taken the lives of millions of its sons. Lenin's party triumphed because it demanded bread, peace, land. The slogan inspired a massive will-to-win in the inarticulate Russian peasantry that was discovering certain brotherhood only in the factory proletarian. Together, they were storming the heavens, as Marx had written of the Paris proletariat of 1871. And none in all the world could stop them.

Much of the world was there to stop them. Shortly after Bob arrived, taut, eager, bursting to know, he learned that interventionist armies were moving onto Russian soil. Alien feet tramped the length and breadth of the new workers' land. British feet, French, Italian, Serbian, Czech, and yes, American. Before Bob was in Moscow a month, he read that the Japanese had invaded Siberia. More British troops landed in Vladivostok. And soon Woodrow Wilson was sending boys from Detroit, Cleveland, New York, San Francisco to far-off Russia.

Could the counter-revolutionary foreign armies, leagued with the White Guards, overturn the workers' order? That question burned through Bob's mind. He had come here reading of the French Revolution: now he was comparing what he saw to the American Revolution. These people had an inalienable right, like the American colonists, his forebears, to a government of their own choosing. Why, the country was one vast Valley Forge, hunger-ridden, yet everywhere he went the people, the "dark masses" as they called them in the tsar's day, were aflame with enthusiasm for the new.

Days and nights jumbled into one: he ate little for there was little to eat, he slept scarcely at all in the little, cold room where six others, strangers, slept. He made the rounds, to the trade unions, to the bustling, bristling headquarters of the Bolsheviks where stern men, eyes red-rimmed for want of sleep, faces unshaven, came and went, came and went. And often he stopped

on the Red Square to look at the strange beauty of the Kremlin with its wonderful medieval turrets and bulbous spires, the winking lights of the Government that burned through the nights.

He conversed with everybody in his plunging, pidgin-Russian and they stopped, in their agitated comings and goings of Revolution to reply. Workingmen in caps, ragged shoes on their feet, were courteous, even gracious, and yet they were hungry, hungrier even than he. What sustained them? He thought he knew and he marveled at the sustenance of Revolution that could transform bags of bones into giants of endurance. The workingmen found him *sympatitchny* or *sympatico,* as the Mexicans in his Texas town would have put it, in, oddly, virtually the same word, for the demeanor of this big, loose-limbed young man with the sharp brown eyes was one of respect for them and their ways.

He was already quite hard-of-hearing, the ailment for which Dr. Caplan back in St. Louis had treated him, and he bent low, straining to catch every word. At nights he studied a Russian grammar, marking the verbs and endings in his red and blue pencil, memorizing them through the din of his jammed room.

His was no formal diary, but impressions jotted down on scarce scraps of paper, on the backs of envelopes, on wrapping paper, anything at hand at the moment. What he wrote he illustrated with marvelous, on-the-spot sketches; a young lusty soldier in a greatcoat, a regiment of marching troops, a clear-eyed workingman with prominent cheek-bones. "Red Army boys, peasants," he noted, "march into battle for the new making the sign of the Cross." He never forgot the regiment after regiment of young bearded men who went swinging down the streets to the nearby battlelines, lifting their voices in the magnificent Russian songs, some revolutionary, and others, as often as not, religious.

Another impression he jotted down on the back of a paper bag: the orderliness of the people. Somewhere he had the conception, born perhaps of Carlisle, that there would be a roar in the streets, ragged masses singing the Slavic versions of the *Carmagnole, Ca Ira.* Yet the streets were exceptionally ordinary, the people went their way, made their rounds, to work, to the grocer's, the children to school, the young couples to the marriage altars. He read, with a rising indignation, the

CAPITALISM: "Hey, there, you're taking one-sixth of the world?"
LABOR: "Yes, and the job's not finished yet!" —*Daily Worker*, 1924

western newspapers that headlined stories describing bloodshed, anarchy, in the Russian cities. "False almost in toto," he cabled the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*. "There is less disorder, and a man, woman or child of the bourgeois or any other class, is safer on the streets of Moscow than in any other city I have ever seen."

Contrary to all the talk of Red Terror, he discovered an astounding latitude. Men, women, everywhere spoke freely, openly; he even encountered vocal and hysterical advocates of the White Guards in the hotels and cafes of the foreigners. One dispatch to the New York *Call* said he understood from frequent conversations in Moscow with Kolchak supporters, "that it is their desire and their plan to incite to a wholesale slaughter of Jews throughout Russia, as a means of winning power." Time and again, he noted, he heard prominent Kolchak supporters use the words, "We will hang every Jew in Russia." Not, he concluded, that they are particularly concerned about the Jews "but they frankly say that this would be a practical way of accomplishing the overthrow of a government which in the popular imagination is largely composed of Jews."

He returned to the question of the imaginary Red Terror a number of times for there were acres of columns in the world's newspapers that described, horrendously, the thousands lined up against the walls for execution. The London *Times* wrote that the terror of the French Revolution was child's play compared to the terror of the Bolsheviks. Bob walked through the streets of Moscow watching the workmen as they clung to the trolley cars in the morning en route to work, the lovers who strolled down the boulevards in the evenings. What terror? And one day he turned the corner onto Red Square to encounter a group of men talking English. They were fourteen English war prisoners and one American, all captured on the Archangel front. And here they were walking about in freedom, forbidden only, they said, to leave the city or to discard their unforms. How did they feel about all this? Weren't they supposed to be executed? "That's what we were told, chum," a long, lantern-jawed soldier replied in a Cockney accent. But here they were, they were to be given jobs, and a Bolshevik commissar said they would be allowed to vote in the elections. Bob shook hands with them, and walked on, thinking hard.

Bob questioned many more workers, and Bolshevik authori-

ties, and that night he wrote on a large sheet of wrapping paper, "The Soviet government is expected to fall any day. The counter-revolutionists boldly make their plans, feeling that their lives are not risked, and, if they are caught, their prison sentences would only last a few days that the regime has left to it." He wrote that a Bolshevik told him that when the authorities arrested a White Guard only the other day he laughed and said to his jailer: "Only 30 days. Then I'll get out and shoot you."

Several months later, he added that the opponents of the regime have come to believe the Bolsheviks "will preside over their jails for some itme to come." Prison sentences now were taken seriously, and the death sentence, rarely pronounced, was seldom executed. "The Red Terror, by which I mean the execution of members of the upper classes actively actively engaged in counter-revolution, is practically or entirely a thing of the past."

This is not to say that Bob was without inner conflict as he watched the procession of the Revolution storm by. He had questions. He had come to believe that the official Socialist parties of the world had fallen into a wasteland of opportunism as he believed the Socialist Party in the United States had. He speculated on the ideas of the anarcho-syndicalists, the Wobblies back home. A state, they said, all states, were tyrannous. Let the trade unions spontaneously make the revolution, and en masse, build their new classless society. The idea, he felt, had its merits. He visited the factories, the union quarters, to see for himself.

The factories were forlorn. Workers sweated with the enormous problems of production, of technique. The devastation of war left them a poor legacy. The tsarist economy had never mastered the complications of twentieth century technique.

His heart went out to the workingmen as he saw them ponder the big wheels, their brows creased. The specialists, engineers, technicians, were overwhelmingly loyal to the old order. They were in no mood to extend themselves, to lend their skill and experience to the sweating, arguing, hungry men in the worn overalls who were now top rail. The old experts dragged their feet.

Before Bob arrived, the workers formed committees and tried to run the plants "in collegium," en masse, on equalitarian

standards. They were, so to speak, industrial armies without a general staff. They lacked the blueprint imperative to a modern industrial order. Lenin and his party grappled with this dilemma: in its solution lay the future. He saw that order, industrial discipline, the allocation of individual responsibility, was immediately necessary for survival. Persuade, woo the specialists, he exhorted, to help you build the new society. Use the old while you train the new.

The "Left" Communists led by men like Nikolai Bucharin opposed Lenin. Their thinking was closer to that of the anarchists and middle class parties who bridled at the idea of the new disciplines, the imperative need to learn the zig-zag of tactics, to advance, as Lenin said, by retreating one step where necessary in order to advance two steps when possible. Debate was furious on a hundred questions and everywhere men argued.

Lenin's views were gaining the day. The new disciplines were being established despite enormous hardship. His opponents, the recalcitrant anarchists and Socialist Revolutionaries, as well as the "Left" Communists were losing ground.

Some Wobblies from the States and anarchists from other lands came to Bob. They took him aside and spoke long and earnestly and unhappily. Their dream of a society in which the state had disappeared and the workers would magically, through a mystic, innate inspiration, run matters straightaway, "in collegium," as the Russians called it, was not materializing. Lenin and his Communists were building a state based on something called the dictatorship of the proletariat. But listen, Bob, who were the dictators? Look around and you will see the men in the pince-nez creeping back. The soldiers are beginning to salute a new caste of officers. The Red Guard in overalls was giving way to the Red Army in uniform. Individuals were given too much authority over the masses.

"Were these men right?" Bob reflected, troubled. Was Lenin a dogmatist, as they said. Wasn't there good in Bakunin too? He must see Lenin himself, talk with him.

Bob sought out an old acquaintance from the states, a De Leon Socialist named Boris Reinstein who was there, and he was able to help. Together they walked into the hall of the Metropole Hotel where the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviet Congress was in session. At a distance he

watched the grouping of leaders around the rostrum: the leaders of the Russian Revolution, the greatest men of their time.

Reinstein jogged Bob's elbow. There, he said, that man over to the side, that was Lenin. He saw a small, modest-looking man standing in a corner, his foot raised and resting on some object, drably dressed, a worker's cap aslant on his head. "Lenin," he observed, "spoiled the picture of a gathering of great men." Could this really be he? He resembled his photographs, only he was so much less important-looking than all the rest. For some minutes Bob continued to scrutinize the company, the giants of this vast revolution. But his eyes kept turning to the obscure man in the corner who seemed to him the prototype of all the world's ordinary men. Then he noticed the peculiar play of Lenin's features as he spoke and as he listened, a good listener obviously. "Gradually he became the visual center of the room and of the gathering," Bob wrote that night. "Everything else faded into its place and proportion."

Bob sent up his name, mentioning his connection with the Mooney case and he got word back. Yes, Lenin would see him. The first meeting that next night, remained indelible in Bob's mind though Lenin said very little. "He has a way of making the other person wag his tongue," Bob thought. Lenin wanted to know every detail of the response within the working class of the United States, the attitude of the trade unions toward the Bolshevik Revolution. Bob told Lenin the advanced members of the AFL enormously appreciated the workers and sailors of Petrograd who had saved Tom Mooney's life by their demonstrations that induced President Wilson to intervene. It was this, really, that caused the Governor of California to commute the death sentence. When he said he was herewith conveying the official thanks of the trade unions that constituted the Mooney defense committee, conveying it to him, the head of the Soviet state, Lenin's eyes "glistened" but he was silent.

They discussed the reactionary attitude of the AFL leaders who had refused to defend Mooney and the San Francisco regional leaders who had participated in the frame-up and condemnation of Tom. Bob mentioned old Samuel Gompers who had supported the San Francisco labor officials in Mooney's frame-up. And Lenin, with a smile, asked, "About Gompers, tell me, will he live forever?"

Mainly Lenin asked questions, and stood, bald head cocked to a side, listening intently. What about Jim Larkin, the Soviet leader asked, Larkin who represented the pro-Bolshevik attitude among Irish-American workers. Bob mentioned sadly that the last speech he heard Larkin make the Irishman spoke of himself as a Catholic. Lenin's reply was monosyllabic, yet strangely meaningful. "So?" Lenin asked, with a curious gesture, "So?" Bob pondered that monosyllable several years later and when he read Lenin's writings on religion he discovered that the Bolshevik thinker rejected the concept that religion was a major obstacle to the unity of workers or to their membership in a Marxist party.

As Bob drew on his overcoat to leave he upset some books on a bookcase and they toppled to the floor. Lenin bent down and began picking them up, without halting his conversation. The unassuming act lingered in Bob's memory, an insight, he felt, into the character of Lenin, this greatest single force shaping the world in the greatest moment of history. Absent in him was the faintest trace of air, of pose or pomp: he was as plain as bread, peace, land. Lenin invited him to come again, shaking his hand warmly.

Meanwhile famine joined the ranks of the counter-revolution. The neutral sun burned the young wheat and the granaries were empty. Bob traveled the land on the endless troop trains heading toward the fronts, the peasant boys staring at the brown, dry, cracked soil of the countryside. Everywhere he saw withering faces, dust-covered and desolate villages.

The vast steppes of the land, rolling far into the horizons, the big sky serene in unconscious cruelty, the boundless vistas brought Texas to mind and he pondered the kinship of this land to his. In a Ukrainian village, not far from the lines the Germans held, a bearded farmer, his feet wrapped in rags, his face wrinkled by endless suns, questioned him about America. Soon a group of peasants gathered about them as they talked and one of the women, still young, her broad but haggard face framed by a white kerchief, carried a child whose belly was swollen. "Hunger," Bob thought, "famine." Bob spoke of his people who lived in a land too that rolled to the horizons and who worked the soil; plain, honest folk who would have given their distant brothers a hand, in solidarity, if they knew what they should. "Then tell me, brother," the woman in the white kerchief asked,

"Is it true that Americans are on our soil, with guns?" It was not easy to answer, standing there under the cloudless sky, the dusty earth brown and burning, the child's blue eyes in its pale face, upon him. He spoke of the capitalists who hide the truth from the people, capitalists like their old landlords here, avaricious, cruel, scheming. "But the soldiers know," the woman persisted, "that they have come to another's land and to do no good. Is that so hard to understand?"

And Bob stood there, sweating, ashamed, trying to explain. But the explanation came hard indeed as the hungry child began to whimper, and Bob though of the blockade that was condemning her and thousands more like her, to death.

"You can't explain murder," he wrote that night. He saw many others like these, in a score of villages and ravaged towns, and all asked similar questions.

It was hard to eat their bread, take their hospitality, as he thought of the troop ships sailing out from the harbors of New York and Seattle, the encampments flying the Stars and Stripes eight thousand miles from home, bayonets against a nation that was passing through its 1776, its 1861.

He returned to Moscow, heart-sick, hungry, and ill. "June, July, August and September were the worst period of famine while I was there," he wrote. In Moscow, the capital, breakfast was seven or eight cups of tea, no sugar. At noon he feasted on soup, a plate of hot water with a little cabbage in it. Supper was a "dried fish about six inches long, of the perch type, dried with the entrails inside." He peeled the skin, cut the fish open, pulled out the entrails, then gobbled the rest. He made his rounds, giddy with hunger, his stomach grumbling painfully from some ailment he picked up on his travels.

Bob wrote to *The Call*: "Yes, there is terrible hunger in Russia. But that hunger is due almost entirely to other causes than Bolshevik rule." Its chief cause was the blockade by the Entente navies, forcibly preventing trade with abroad, and so "hundreds of thousands of women and children are being starved by the Entente and American governments." Offers of charity were hypocritical camouflage to conceal the fact that blockade prevented recovery. "The bankers of Paris and London and New York hope to whip the Russian people into submission." It was a tactic they were to try again more than 30 years later against the new China.

CLEMENCEAU: "But where will you get the troops?"
LENIN: "I'll use yours."

—*The Liberator,* 1920

The enormous crime of intervention was clear. But Bob had yet to see clearly that men who called themselves friends of the Republic could be as harmful as its avowed enemies. Some disgruntled Wobblies, a few old anarchists he knew in the states, brought him tales of grief. The initiative of the workers was being stifled by Lenin's new caste of bureaucrats. It was true on the home front and on the battlelines, they said hollowly, A commander of a "partisan" regiment, an old anarchist Bob had met in the Mooney days back home, came to see him one day. Bob wondered why the man was not at the front and he inquired about the man from some anarchists he knew in Moscow. They assured Bob the man was what he represented himself to be . The commander disappeared and a few days later his wife came to Bob, tearful, said her husband was arrested, tried for desertion from the front, and for robbery. A Red Tribunal had condemned him to death. Would Bob intervene? Would he see Lenin? Her husband could not possibly be guilty, she cried, and then said, at worst, perhaps he had fallen in with bad company.

Bob wrote Lenin a hasty memorandum urging a re-examination of the case and hastened to Lenin's office with it. Lenin was in the midst of a meeting, a secretary told Bob, and could not come out, but she assured him Lenin had carefully read the letter and would instantly act as Bob suggested. Late that night a courier, a Lettish Sharpshooter, knocked on Bob's door and delivered a reply by Lenin, in his own hand, in ink. "Com. Minor," the note said, "I have caused an examination of the case of B——— as I promised. The facts are disclosed to be the following: B——— deserted his post at the front during an action. He stole the pay of his regiment. For such a man I cannot intercede. *Proschaite* (goodbye). Lenin."

The anarchists Bob knew in Moscow made much of the case, but he concluded that Lenin had no other course. The leader of a nation struggling for its life had to be hard when his country's welfare was at stake. Debs himself later said, "The Revolution has a right to defend itself," or, in other words, to secure its gains and guarantee its further progress during the transition period.

And yet Bob was troubled: was the case of this anarchist exceptional? What about others who differed with Lenin's party but were neither deserters or thieves? There was much

he did not yet understand of the principles, the basic theory of this Revolution; he was, as a matter of fact, woefully ignorant of Marxism's fundamental postulates, and prey, therefore to doubts and a certain confusion. On the matter of the anarchists, for example, they maintained open headquarters in Moscow until 1923.

But nothing could confuse him about intervention and its criminality. That was as palpable as the snows that began to fall again. He had spent nine months in the center of the world and he must return to America to tell what he saw. Besides, news came that the Kaiser had fled and that Germany was in revolution. On his way back he would look in on Berlin now on the barricades. He went to say goodbye to Lenin who spoke again of the necessity to stave off international intervention. The Bolsheviks, Lenin said, were raising the question of an agreement on debts the tsarist government had contracted and which the new Government had repudiated. The Allies were making a big issue of this. Could Lenin's willingness for settlement get wide publicity? Bob told Lenin he would, on reaching Germany, try to get his interview with Lenin on this matter into the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*. Lenin, orally, and in haste, between meetings, outlined his views to Bob. The story appeared, garbled, in the New York *World*. Though it was distorted, and though, as Bob said later, he felt he "made none too good a job of this interview due to my own confusion on basic questions of the Revolution," Lenin's willingness to conclude an agreement on the debts reached the western public.

The *World* ran another story the following week, a dispatch by Lowell Mellett, then a United Press correspondent (later a press officer in the Roosevelt government). It was an interview with Bob as he left the Soviet Union. "The world," Mellett quoted him, "has been kidded about Russia awfully. There are swarms of gold-laced gentlemen who have nothing to do but string us along into sending American boys to Russia to restore the privileges which they can neither get nor keep without assistance. They sit around tea tables in Stockholm and Helsingfors and make up yarns that are imposed on everybody as facts." Bob scornfully repudiated a ridiculous lie then current. "A recent press dispatch said that bourgeois women and girls of Moscow were dragged out of their homes and given over for workmen to wreak their lust upon in recognition of the

Bolshevist's anniversary, Nov. 7. I happened to be in Moscow that day and all the daughters of the bourgeois I could see were thumping typewriters for the Bolshevist government."

He concluded with an appeal to resume trade and other normal relations with the workers' country. Instead of military camps in the Soviet Republic, America, he said, "would do well to establish a business camp in Moscow in charge of businessmen of reasonably open outlook. They would be made as safe as in New York and welcomed with music."

'I Got Arrested a Little'

THE SPARTAKISTS were making their last desperate stand on the gray streets of Berlin when Bob arrived, wearing a high fur hat, a Russian greatcoat and boots. He checked in at a hotel, then plunged into the city streets heading for the barricades which he found soon enough. He ducked the whining bullets that cracked against the walls of the building the revolutionists were defending. It was the last tragic act of an epic, this attempt of the German working class to establish a workers' and farmers' republic as their Russian brothers across the border had done a year before.

The men fought almost barehanded, they were mowed down by machineguns, they were stabbed to death by bayonets. But worse, he saw that the Spartakists, the Left Social-Democrats, were defeated by treason within their party, were betrayed by right "Socialist" leaders like Scheidemann and Noske, the president and the foreign minister of the government that rose after the Kaiser ran. These were the foremost leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party, the "Kaiser Socialists" as the scornful phrase had it.

In desperation the Spartakists had stormed and taken the *Vorwarts,* Scheidemann's daily newspaper that betrayed them daily. Bob slipped inside the back door, edging between the big rolls of newsprint that made stout barriers and he talked with men who knew they were soon to die. They looked up at him, startled to see the big figure in the outfit they regarded as Russian and they smiled. They had the "Lenin idea," as he called it and they asked "der Russ" a thousand questions about the Russian revolution. A few hours later their bodies were bleeding on the pavements.

Later, soberly, Bob walked the streets of Berlin, disdaining the fiery spurts of the machineguns. He rushed, too late, into a crowd of well-dressed burghers who were beating a man to death. The man, a worker, evidently a Spartakist, lay in the gutter, his hands outstretched, his fingers still working, his head a great clot of blood. On this block men were dying, on the next block housewives were scurrying to market, on another block a crowd stood listening to the harangue of a speaker: the swirls and eddies of eery normalcy and matter-of-fact bloodshed. "A city revolution."

He mingled with the crowds, watched their faces as they listened to the orators. That week he wrote a dispatch to the *Liberator* in New York. "It is the strangest sight in the world," he said, "when a crowd begins to think. Promenaders have been promenading, and nondescripts quit hurrying where they are bound, and nobody says 'Move on, there! but everybody talks earnestly to someone he never saw before." Anatole France, he wrote, "tried to explain it in describing the French Revolution, and since the Russian Revolution a few more efforts have been made to tell how crowds think." Most of it remains to be told, for it is "an astonishing, flabbergasting thing." You must have "a lack of policeman and simultaneously a big, life-and-death issue," and then there comes a sort of chemical action in the crowd, "like the turning of milk." The human mass that had flowed easily in whatever direction its owners chose to pour it "suddenly, congeals at a peal of thunder—cannon-thunder—ceases to pour, and it is no longer sweet to the taste of those who have been drinking."

He remained in Berlin long enough to watch the German crowd begin to think, but it was too late. The inexperienced Spartakist Bund was not strong enough. Bob saw Germany slip back into the hands of Scheidemann and Noske, back into the grip of Krupp and Thyssen and Schneider, who later elevated Adolph Hitler to power.

He left for Paris with a heavy heart.

The bells were pealing in Paris. Woodrow Wilson had embarked for the Peace Conference with his numerous retinue and his Fourteen Points. The current joke on the boulevard was the wisecrack of the Tiger, Clemenceau: "Fourteen points? Merde! God Almighty only had ten." Clemenceau was a master of betrayal. In his youth he had been with the Communards

when they rose in 1871. Now he was, as Bob called him, "le Premier Flic," the chief detective.

On his third day in Paris Bob went down to the Labor Temple, the Bourse du Travail, that was full of men and women who worked on the railroads. Many had walked ten, fifteen miles from the other end of Paris to plan a railroad strike that would tie France up until their bread-and-butter needs were met—and until the Premier Flic would agree to keep his hands off Russia. The railroad yards were jammed by long trains laden with munitions for Russia, to the counter-revolution.

Old friends hailed Bob, associates of his student days back in 1913 when he fled the pundits of the art galleries and spent his days in the workers' neighborhoods. They exulted when he told them he had just returned from Russia: "Tell us about the Revolution," they cried. "I told them," he wrote, "what they already knew—that stories of Bolshevik cruelty to the bourgeoisie were lies; that the only purpose for the attack upon Russia was to punish labor for confiscating the holdings of capital and that hundreds of thousands of Russian men, women and children were starving because of the Allied blockade." The railroadmen invited him to return the following Wednesday and tell his story again to a bigger gathering. The notice of the forthcoming meeting appeared in their paper.

That Sunday as Bob sat in his little *pension* at breakfast three men in hard derbies, *flics,* walked in and asked him to accompany them to the police prefecture. There the inspector questioned him all day.

Bob sat obdurate, silent. As the sun set the inspector turned him over to Monsieur le Chef du Service Bertillon who took prints or measurements of the flat of Bob's hands, the tips of his fingers, his thumbprints, his forearm, the thickness of his head and the length of his nose.

Then the prefect asked him to pay for transportation to Coblenz where the American authorities wanted him, Coblenz, the seat of the American Occupation. "Like hell," Bob roared now, "I don't want to go to Coblenz. I have already paid for a ticket to New York. That's where I want to go!" No. Monsieur must go to Coblenz.

Coblenz. The American authorities put Bob into solitary confinement, in a stone building with barred windows and doors. Bob sat down, his back against the wall, his feet cocked

high against the opposite one. His cell was five feet and a half wide and eleven feet long. The philosophy of countless German prisoners and numerous doughboys was scribbled on the walls. *"Liebe Freiheit,"* he read in many places, in handwritings large and small, timid or bold, like the different ways that people have of conceiving *"Liebe Freiheit."*

By morning he almost felt at home in the cell for he had explored it up and down, as every prisoner does, and now there was nothing to do, nothing to read. For diversion he walked, five stingy steps up, five back, his first promenade on that walk-way which is trod a thousand years each year by many men. He wondered how much of it he would have to do.

Toward the week's end Bob detected a change in the manner of his guards. He lacked newspapers but he had, by now, after Mooney, an instinct about prisons and he guessed something was happening in Paris. The news must be out and the Paris working class papers would notify the people; the labor newspapers of London and Rome would follow suit. Good. He paced his room again, heartened.

A friend, Griffin Barry, a journalist, came up from Paris with news. The British military wanted to courtmartial Bob in Cologne, secretly, but labor circles of London and Paris had the news and the American authorities could not turn a prominent American over to the British star chamber whose genteel techniques, Barry said, included strangling. It would be hard to turn him over now that he could not be garroted quietly. It was even possible that Bob might be released without the rigors of a sensational "bolshy" trial they originally planned.

The next day seven officers from General Pershing's staff came to see Bob. Now he certainly knew there would be no secrecy in this matter; so long as it was in the public light he felt he had no cause to fear. The signing of peace was at hand: June 28, 1919 at 3 P.M. Outside Bob could hear the doughboys and the officers jubilating.

The Colonel began by saying anything Bob said might be used against him. Then he handed Bob a typewritten piece of paper that said, "Specifications of charges against Bob Minor." Why, he thought, this was only three hours before peace. What was the idea? He read the charges: they were so foggy that he could make neither head nor tail of them. No, he had nothing to say, and the officers went away.

The next day the Colonel entered Bob's room and said he was free to go to Paris if he wished. "To be turned over to the Paris police?" Bob asked. "No," the officer replied, "You will be set at liberty." That night a secret service man came for him in an automobile, trailing a squad of soldiers, and drove him to the railroad station for Paris. In Paris they returned his passport.

When Bob arrived in Paris he learned more about his case. Lincoln Steffens, as he later wrote in his *Autobiography*, learned in Europe that Bob was charged with promoting Bolshevik propaganda among the American troops during the Armistice. This, evidently, was the interpretation put on Bob's speech to the railroad workers in the Bourse du Travail. "By the time I had traced him," Steffens wrote, "he had been condemned to be shot." Bob had suspected that possibility, but he had not known the decision was already made. Steffens went to Colonel House, Wilson's adviser, and warned that the summary shooting of a man as well known as Bob Minor "would re-arouse ill will." It was the time of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and the flowery rhetoric about democracy. House, Steffens said, saw logic in Steffens' view, the chain of command began to move. After it made the rounds, they freed Bob.

Bob, veteran of the Mooney case, believed that the headlines in the French and British labor newspapers saved his life. *"L'Affaire Minor"* came at a time when France, Britain, all Europe, watched the turbulent awakening of the working class. It would hardly do to shoot the famous cartoonist whose work for Mooney was known, by now, to millions in the United States and in Europe.

Those Bob summoned to free Mooney freed him.

'I Change My Mind a Little'

THE SHIP pulled into New York harbor, up the Narrows, past the Statue of Liberty, the skyscrapers hove into view on the horizon as Bob Minor stood at the rail, his eyes agleam. Home again and a job to do. God, what a job, to help persuade the American government to lay hands off the land of the working class. Where do you begin? He had a pretty good idea and his feet itched to walk his native soil again.

As he stepped off the gangplank two men with a certain, familiar look flashed their credentials: Secret Service. "Just a few questions, Mr. Minor." They told a long, dark tale about a State Department code book which they said was missing from the American Embassy in Paris after he was there for the necessary papers to return to the States. Bob stared at them, and broke into laughter. This was too much. He replied he had been searched from the inside of his shoes to his hat by the military authorities at Coblenz and everything he had on him was taken. He could not possibly have taken the thing that was missing even if he had wanted it, and he had no sensible reason to want it. The two men look at each other, one said, surprisingly, that sounded reasonable, and they departed.

As they left someone else in uniform stopped him, and wearily, now, he asked, "Well, what is it?" When he looked again he saw a Western Union messenger in a uniform similar to the one he wore when he was fifteen. The telegram said Routez was dying. Old Robert wired that she believed Bob had been executed: if she saw Bob, in the flesh, immediately, she might live. He was on the next train to San Antonio.

"Bobby, is that you?" she asked from the bed as he bent over

her. He held her hand and she fell asleep. Two days later she was sitting up; the doctor said wonderingly that he never saw a patient make so sudden a recovery. Propped against pillows, her eyes sunken, she was still the old Routez: she asked Bob a thousand questions about Russia and the old glow returned as he talked, old Robert standing by, listening. Bob had to scold her to silence her but she was incorrigible, asking how the Europeans lived, how they looked, what they said, what Lenin said, was Russia anything like Texas, wasn't it a frozen land? And the American soldiers, why were they there? And chiefly how had they treated Bob in the military fortress of Coblenz.

Two days later Bob bade Routez and old Robert farewell. He went on to San Francisco where he saw Ed Nolan and the others, visited old Tom himself and shook his hands through the bars. He would do whatever was humanly possible on Mooney's behalf, but he felt his major duty now was to speak through the country on behalf of better relations with the Soviet Republic, a durable peace with the Bolshevik government. If his voice could help achieve such a peace, he said to Tom, it would inevitably bring a saner atmosphere in the land that would help free him and Billings. Reluctantly, the old molder agreed. "Yes, Bob," he said slowly, "I guess I see that. I guess you're right.

Extraordinary crowds attended Bob's meetings, drawn by the man and his story. Here was one they trusted, a workingman himself. Advocate of labor, a million and more had read his pamphlet on the Mooney case, knew his cartoons and now they heard his voice. A clear, impassioned voice that inspired confidence. And few, if any, questions transcended his theme: the right of a working class state to exist, the crime of capitalist states to intervene. Bob described what he had seen, faithfully, without adornment: the Russian workingmen, the peasantry, the famine, the parched earth and the empty plates, the dream in the eyes of a nation. He told his story well as he stood on the dais, pale, thin, his beetling eyebrows over cavernous eyepits, the small, sharp eyes burning within. The crowds kept coming.

It is a tribute to the hardihood of the common man, he felt, that they came at all, testament to their courage. For he had returned in one of the most turbulent times in the nation's history. An outraged laboring class was on the march here, as

in Europe. The employers, who had enjoyed the blood-profits of the war were insatiable for more and had begun a drive for the Open Shop now that the conflict was ended. As usual, a Red Scare had to be rigged up like a giant scarecrow at Hallowe'en. A munitions plant blew up at Eddystone, Pa.: conspiracy was "everywhere," "saboteurs "roamed," spies "lurked." The police agents had their work cut out for them. The Burns Detective Agency, the Pinkertons, private eyes by the thousands, wrote their immediate reports. First, the workers with long names of foreign origin were the target of the Deportation Delirium. A ship, the Buford, carried a boatload of exiles to Russia; the prisons were filled with thousands of others; some five thousand were rounded up in dawn raids the last day of 1919, the first day of 1920 as the Quaker Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer unleashed his sleuths, directed by a young assistant named J. Edgar Hoover. Time for new Mooney cases, new frame-ups. Soon the nation was to read of Salsedo, thrown to death from the upper-floor window of the Department of Justice building in New York; soon the names of two humble Italians named Nicola Sacco and Bartolomo Vanzetti were to be common tragic currency. Create the climate to terrify all American workers who were fighting for the existence of their unions, their bitterly-won wage and living standards. The campaign against Labor was fierce, fiercer perhaps than at any time in history. And still the crowds came to hear the man who had just come back from Russia. But something disappointed Bob from virtually his first meeting, something he could scarcely assess. "Behind the cheers and in the sea of upturned faces," he wrote in the *Liberator,* October of 1920, in his article, "I Change My Mind a Little," "I could read that something was lacking in what I had to tell them."

They came and enthusiastically they endorsed the right of the Russian workers to a government of their choice. But had they not come for more than that? The question troubled Bob after each meeting. Did they come, too, because they wanted him, a man they trusted and who had been there himself, to help them *understand* the new government, the new social system. It seemed to him, after he pondered the question in Philadelphia, in Boston, in New York, in Chicago, after each meeting, that they sensed a turning-point in man's history. Was he failing them? Was it enough to speak against interveniton when the

"Having made the world safe for democracy, we must now settle the Irish question."

—*The Liberator,* 1920

people came prepared to oppose that, but eager to know in exact detail, *what* the Allied armies were intervening against? "Slowly, I began to sense in the labor masses a current as profound as the tides of the sea. I was bothered with the illusive impression that a great natural law was at work which I did not understand."

The Russian revolution had set a vast "natural" current into motion. "There couldn't be anything the matter with a natural law, so I thought there must be something the matter with me."

So, he said in the *Liberator,* he settled down in some out-of-the-way place to study, to understand what was wrong in his comprehension of the Russian Revolution.

Three volumes of Marx's *Capital* lay on the table of his room and he was through the first volume when someone brought him a copy of Lenin's pamphlet, *"The State and Revolution.* "The reading of that pamphlet was an event of my life. I read it four times." He was startled to discover that this booklet, written three months before the October Revolution, outlined the basic steps for its achievement. Its timing, what it had to say, made an enormous impact on his mind.

He had thought, he wrote in this *Liberator* article which was, in fact, his credo, that he had understood the Soviet state when he left there eighteen months before. Now he realized he did not understand. He must "almost" class himself with Bertrand Russell, Mrs. Philip Snowden and others who went to Russia with a preconceived standard, "found it did not fit the standard," and returned home to spread a "very damaging misconception."

True, he returned to demand that the blockade be lifted and the military expeditions against the Soviet Union be withdrawn. "But I did not unqualifiedly endorse the Bolshevik regime."

Why not? his audience evidently wondered. When he asked that of himself he knew he must answer it. He retraced his thoughts, his ideas, their derivation. He had not endorsed the Bolshevik regime because of his reservations; he feared to declare his reservations because he might rouse factional differences among the defenders of the workers' republic.

What were those reservations? They sprang essentially from his gradual acceptance of the anarchist contention that all states

were evil. He had hesitated to accept the concept of "the dictatorship of the proletariat," the form of the new workers and peasants' government. Did proletarian dictatorship mean a new enchainment of freedom? Were not islands of "local autonomous Soviets," as his anarchist acquaintances argued, preferable to a powerful centralized government that could, if it wished, stifle the workers' initiative? Had Lenin's government, set in power by what they conceived as anarchist tactics, betrayed anarchism by turning to Marxist concepts? Were not such compromises as the peace at Brest-Litovsk and its cession of great territories to the Kaiser's armies an enormous retreat from the spirit and will of the ten days that shook the world? Was the creation of the disciplined Red Army, the restoration of the draft and the authority to officers, another, and perhaps fatal retreat from freedom, from the voluntary armies and the Red Guards, the workers in overalls who carried guns? In sum, had Lenin's Communist Party, his Bolsheviks, set the revolutionary clock back by constructing a strong, centralized state?

These were his chief reservations, yes, as he toured the United States. With a sickening feeling as he read Lenin's works, his *State and Revolution,* he understood, now, that he had been totally wrong. The Bolsheviks had not used anarchist tactics and principles to win. He read on to discover, he said, that he was an ignoramus in the vast realm of Marxist political and economic theory. He had not grasped its philosophy. At the scene of the revolution he did not understand what he saw. He had not learned, as he was to say so many times afterward, that practice without theory, as Stalin put it, was blind, and that theory without practice was barren. It was perhaps the greatest lesson of his life.

State and Revolution was based, in part, upon Frederick Engels' book, *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* He remembered, with chagrin, that he had never read that book. It struck him as hard a blow as Lenin's work. His "out-of-the-way" place became his Marxist university as he pored over many books, sitting through the night until dawn, snatching a few hours sleep and returning to read.

Merciless with himself, as frank with himself as man can be, accepting his self-verdict of ignorance, which, even the law books said, is no defense, he read on with the exhilaration of discovery. The new ideas seemed to stretch the fabric of his mind,

carry him winged across intellectual obstacles, mental roadblocks.

He contrasted what he was learning about the state and correlary matters with the basic works of the anarchist sects. He was "chagrined and amazed" to discover that Kropotkin, the anarchist spokesman "did not even understand the source of the state." Kropotkin, the other anarchists, led him to believe that "the state results from the ambition of men to rule," that the will to rule was due to "the inherent egoism of man."

Now, he asked himself with a twinge of embarrassment, did that not sound "like 'original sin'?" Engels traced the origin of the state from the time when classes—those who owned and those who were dispossessed—appeared in history. Engels "proved that nowhere on earth was a state or a king known until after private property accumulations began—a considerable time after civilization began." The state, obviously, came into existence to secure the domination of one class over the other, the propertied over the propertyless. The bourgeois state was, in sum, the dictatorship of the capitalist class over the working class, the domination of a handful over the vast majority of the people. Surely he, of all Americans, could see that, after the Mooney case. He had, then, looked into the vast machinery of the state and saw its workings: every cog, every wheel, meshed to fasten the supremacy of the rich upon the poor. True, the workings were concealed, as the shiny hood of an automobile conceals the intricate mechanism and process beneath. But the mechanic, if not the layman, know the play of forces under the varnish. He had been a mechanic, as it were, in the trials of Mooney and his friends. He should have known. He should have realized that every step, every move in that case, was part of the process of bourgeois dictatorship.

Proletarian dictatorship, he learned, was the state form conceived by Marx after the Paris Commune was crushed because the French workers after they had assumed state power allowed the employing class to retain political power, and armed power, to remain as a class. The dictatorship of the proletariat, the government of the many, the overwhelming majority, the factory producers, the farm producers, was a guarantee of victory. Lenin said it was absolutely imperative, after the workers gained power, to protect the new state against the exploiting classes of the world whose numerous guns were trained on them. Even

Debs, writing from Atlanta, agreed with that. Hadn't Bob seen that in the orgy of intervention? Lenin foresaw the dangers from abroad and from within to the proletarian state, hence he preached the dictatorship of the many. When the dangers from abroad and from within ended, and Communism was ultimately achieved, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the state, would wither away.

Other matters began to come clear. After "the great flash of light" from Lenin's booklet, he saw that the concept of the anarchists, "locally autonomous Soviets," was "pitiful." Now they seemed "a constrained, tight little makeshift of semi-states when we see Lenin striking straight for a non-state society with a clear program for getting it more quickly than any other had ever dared to hope."

Hence, he wrote, the workers, the producing classes, once they had vanquished the previous oppressive state power, needed to create their own state, with a strong centralized authority over industry, over the police organs, over a strong army. He recalled his own observations on the spot. "There is nothing more certain to me now than that Pilsudski, Yudenitch, Kolchak, and Lloyd George would long ago have obtained possession of all of Russia if the Bolsheviks had not made a centrally controlled army under rigid discipline."

"What strange power has Lenin?" Bob wondered. "Why does every adversary, one by one, fall before him?" He answered his question. "The answer is that Lenin is a scientist in an unscientific world." Bob closed his credo with the sentence: "I withdrew every reservation that I made in praise of the Russian Soviet Republic."

Once he saw that Marxism was a liberating science, he joined the Communist movement, and afterward became a leading member of the Communist Party until his dying day, thirty-two years later.

The Liberator

BOB'S DRAWINGS were appearing regularly in the *Liberator* these days: full pages, double-pages, illustrations in his inimitable grays and blacks and whites where men were in motion, in conflict, and more often than not, they appeared in the same issues with his articles, as biting in words as his cartoons were in line.

An inspired assembly of young men and young women, writers, artists, poets, gathered here from small town and metropolis, some like Bob, from old American families, others from young American families, the sons and daughters of the day's immigrants. All were in rebellion against the mammon-worship of the land, deeply influenced by the Socialist ideas of the time. The magazine had flowered from the early days of the *Masses,* its predecessor, that began in 1911. The artists and writers originally drew their inspiration from the radical Populism of the Midwest, from the unrest of urban labor, from the seething distrust of corporative wealth. No few were members of the Socialist Party, they shared their politics with their red wine and bread.

By now, 1920, purpose had come clearer. The existence of the first workers' republic crystallized the dissent and clarified the dream. A galaxy of established artists and writers, many of whom had appeared in the *Masses,* as well as the thundering young who were to become renowned, were in deadly earnest. Americans like John Reed, Michael Gold, Boardman Robinson, Art Young, Floyd Dell, Charles Erskine, Scott Wood, Arturo Giovanitti, Maurice Becker, Cornelia Barnes, Edmund Wilson, Howard Brubaker, Alexander Trachtenberg, Hugo Gellert, Rolphe Humphries, Max Eastman, Wanda Gag, Claude McKay. Carl Sandburg's poems appeared frequently, and often you en-

countered Louis Untermeyer, occasionally Heywood Broun, and on special occasions, anniversaries of working class history, Eugene V. Debs would write. Some were to weaken, to fall by the wayside, or join their enemy—like Max Eastman—others, most, in fact, did not falter.

The magazine became known on both sides of the water as the embodiment of America's literary rebellion, and when H. G. Wells came he inspected the staff as he might the odd artifacts of some remote civilization, peering at them through his glasses as he stroked the end of his mustache. A certain mischief twinkled in his gray eyes, he seemed to relish baiting the young men and women who sat around him, courteous but shrewdly observant. Oh, he himself was a Socialist, of course, but "revolution must some from the top."

Yes, he conceded, most of the flaming youth here were admirable human beings but they were obsessed by the notion of a class struggle which he, for one, could not discover in America. Here anybody could become a gentleman "whereas in England, oh yes, there were classes." He was abundantly repaid for the fun he was having. The next month the magazine carried an irreverent drawing by a young artist from the East Side named William Gropper that depicts a little stout chap smoking a cigarette, his hand plunged in his pocket who says, "But really, you have no classes in America!" And Mike Gold is quoted under the caption, saying "A bourgeois, boys, a bourgeois, by the sacred whiskers of Karl Marx." Which was not far from Lenin's thought who called Wells, after his famous interview, "a philistine."

Bob came onto the magazine, joined the eloquent, threadbare company, his energies aflame. They wrote, or they drew: he wrote, he drew, he lectured, he taught. He recruited. In every issue he reflected the turbulence of the days that roared in him. If others wrote or drew with an eye for posterity, he labored impatiently for the here and the now. Few scenes of major political, social or artistic import happened without his solid presence: he strode through strikes, political manifestations, art shows, libraries. His drawings have fury, his words were like his drawings.

Characteristic of his style as writer is a review he wrote of the paintings of an old friend, William Sanger, which appeared in the January 1920 issue; Sanger his old companion in Paris

during his stay as an art student. "In the Louvre we stewed over the Primitives, which Sanger seemed to have a strange power to understand; we got drunk on Manet's *Olympe* and went on sprees of Greco and Cezanne, interspersed with discussion of Bakunin who is their brother." Sanger painted "tight," those days, an ache was in him, a monotony. He looked always into himself. But four years and a war, a revolution passed and Sanger changed.

Bob revealed himself as well as Sanger; and shed a light on the folk around the magazine, and in fact, upon millions on the globe. "William Sanger," Bob concluded, "is not the only man who is becoming booming articulate in these times. Others are changing. There is a great Articulateness coming into the world. It is associated with various things; it has a thousand causes; all causes are its causes. It is something which makes us look Outward as well as In, for our emotional material. But I haven't said what it is. I can't say what it is, but the Russian Revolution is its most tangible manifestation."

Bob, too, had become "boomingly Articulate." The following month, February, he drew a small, ridiculous, battered Clemenceau, the old *Premier Flic,* hands outstretched in a Gallic gesture, his lips turn down petulantly, as he asks Lenin, "But where will you get the troops?" And Lenin, smiling, hands in pockets in full aplomb, replies, "I'll use yours."

The "great Articulateness," in capital A, pervaded the *Liberator* in this time of plunging reaction when atrocities on labor were scheduled by the Administration as on a railroad time table. The I.W.W.'s, all left-wingers and socialists, felt the whiplash. The transport *Buford* was the national symbol as it deported hundreds whom the government deemed "undesirable" and Boardman Robinson has a magnificent drawing in the same issue wherein the smoke from the ship's funnels blots out the face of Miss Liberty as it passes out to sea. J. T. Doran of the I.W.W. told how the vigilantes murdered and looted in Centralia, Washington, that gory Armistice Day of 1919. Howard Brubaker, later of the *New Yorker* magazine, wrote, in his *Liberator* column of sagacious quips, " 'Why were our second-class privileges taken away?' asked the New York *Call.* Mr. Burleson (the Postmaster General) deliberated for eleven months and then replied without a moment's hesitation: 'Because you are not a newspaper.' A smaller mind might have needed time to think up an answer like that.' " The issue carried an account

from bleeding Germany, a photograph of Rosa Luxemburg, murdered by her enemies; a deathmask of Karl Liebknecht, drawn by Kathe Kollwitz. Boardman Robinson has the center spread with a classic since reprinted in almost every land of the world, a drawing of Lenin, smoking a cigarette, in a chess game with Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George who shrink back, in consternation, as he says, "Checkmate, Gentlemen!" A sombre report from Italy described the rebelling workers of Milan. Alexander Trachtenberg, who was soon to found the house of International Publishers, recorded the progress of the world labor movement in his column.

A half-page advertisement signed by Roger N. Baldwin is a significant commentary on the time. "Wholesale raids and arrests all over the country--surpassing the exploits of the Czar's Black Hundreds—have temporarily deprived the Communist Party of headquarters and working staffs. During this emergency we must depend for defense funds upon immediate donations from individuals and groups. A committee of persons not connected with the Communist Party has agreed to act as custodian of the fund." Another full page advertisement asks for "Help to the Deportees."

In these pages Bob is an avenging knight bearing many weapons: lance, mace, broadsword. He used them all against the snorting giants of privilege, galloping, as he did to all points of the darkened land where he heard the tumult of battle. In March, the next month, he traveled up the Hudson to Albany where five Socialist assemblymen were denied their seats of office. He sat in the balcony and caught the faces of the principal actors, the haughty disdain of the persecutors, his pen had them down like insects on a pin. A dozen of them. As he draws he listens, everything is functioning energetically, a splendid machine of a man; eyes see, ears hear, mind whirrs, hands, fingers move. The artist. And always there is heart. "Decades of self-sacrifice, it cost," he says of the election of Socialist assemblymen, "and countless pennies from half-starved dreamers in the tenements." Bob called his article "Dissolving the Duma at Albany," after the episode in tsarist history earlier that century when Nicholas the Tsar expelled and then arrested the Bolsheviks elected to the chamber.

The man is boiling, lava-like. Every month, every issue, his talent tumbles over the crater, fills the pages, white-hot. One

Carl Sandburg

Sid Hatfield

Black River Fall, Wis.
J. H. Carnahan, Farmer

Sidney Hillman

man? He is half a dozen, and all of him is loving it. Boomingly Articulate? No wonder he uses capital letters. Nothing about him is in lower-case. Where Man needed him, there he went, unsparing of himself, gaunt now, his clothes hang on his big frame, loose, his coat-tails are fairly flying. Pack that suitcase, toss two or three clean shirts inside, a few pairs of socks, a toothbrush, and, carefully, now, a couple of books, history, politics, Marxist classics. He loves to travel the land, his eyes observing the passing cities, the mountains, the rivers, the meadows, the plains and the lakes, the faces of men, of women, of children, especially the children, and always he finds times for the books into which he would plunge, making notes, underlining passages, reflecting, studying. He moves in big motions, seems to surge, he is part of the swift tide of history. And then, at his destination, he rushes into his story, his nostrils flaring at the challenge.

In August he is in the West Virginia Cumberlands, where the miners have taken up their rifles against the Baldwin-Felts gangsters. It is a national scandal. The miners had marched in desperation against the armies of gunmen imported by the coal corporations. It has been war here, for eighteen years, since 1902, bloody war in these lovely, lonely mountains and men had died on their green slopes by the hundreds. The coal companies took over the rule of the state, built a gold-domed capital in Charleston. Coal company Governors ruled its mountaineers who had been driven from their sparse patches of farms into the pits below. Coal company courts judged the miners. Coal company sheriffs drove them back into the coal pits when they rebelled.

Now, after the war, in the surge of strikes nationally, the miners were marching again. District 17 of the United Mine Workers, he learned in Charleston, comprising the southern half of West Virginia, has grown from five thousand to forty-two thousand. Here he learned the war map, the location of the strongholds of each side. The union has run a beachhead into Logan County, Baldwin-Felts country run by Don Chafin, who was officially the County Clerk. Baldwin ruled Mercer, McDowell, Wyoming and Mingo Counties from his G.H.Q. at Bluefield.

Stories of beatings, mass evictions, shootings, trickled north from Logan to the union county of Kanawah. Thousands of

miners took rifles and began a great Armed March to Logan to release it from tyranny. They marched, singing, down the valleys, carrying placards that said "To Establish the Constitution." Mountaineers welcomed them and brought food, leading them through the narrow passes. At the border of Logan County the Governor of the State intercepted them and promised nervously he would investigate the terrorism. He persuaded the miners to turn back. This was a little while before Bob arrived in Charleston.

But, as Bob knew, the roots of the democraitc spirit sink deep into American soil and even here, under the flaming muzzles, it was not dead. In some of the counties where the union existed, town and county officials came to office who respected the Constitution. This was true in Mingo, and in the town of Matewan. Mayor Testaman and Sheriff Sid Hatfield were decent men. Not pro-labor basically, but they defended the heresy that even the coal companies had to abide by the laws. The miners have the right to public assembly, they said, and miners flocked into the union, all the coal-diggers of Mingo.

Organizing began in Matewan, and the Baldwin-Felts gangsters came with rifles to eject the miners, using the authority of "Yaller Dog" contracts that denied them the right to join a union. The mayor and the sheriff defended the miners' constitutional rights. A battle ensued on May 19 between the gangsters of the coal company, and the officials and citizens of Matewan. Seven gangsters were killed after they had killed Mayor Testaman.

It was this story which Bob wanted to publish in the *Liberator*. That would lay the basis for the legal defense of the miners and the sheriff, whom the authorities would doubtless send to the gallows if they could.

At five-thirty of a clean, mountain morning Bob descended from the train at Matewan, a cluster of wooden houses, a half dozen stores, two saloons—a mining town. Scarcely anyone was on the streets as Bob reconnoitered the place, looking it over, making a few quick sketches on his pad. He knew he would attract attention in a place where attention could be fatal, and he was careful, as well as he knew how to be. Caution, however, was not his earmark. You did what you had to do—for your goal, your story, in this case, you took no crazy risks, but you did what you had to do. There was the swiftly-flowing Tug

River and Bob walked to the middle of the bridge crossing it, looking at the steep slopes on both sides of the stream. A sandy-haired boy of twelve approached him, in overalls, barefooted, but who asked with a grin, "Is it true they got two more thugs up by the road last night?" Bob turned to talk to the boy and noticed a man sitting on a bench before a building over which a red scrawl of letters said, "U.M.W.A."

Bob knew that eyes were on him now, and it was time to talk, fast, perhaps. The man watched him approach, glumly, and listened, glumly, as Bob introduced himself. When Bob said he was a friend of Fred Mooney, secretary of the UMW at Charleston, the man's face limbered up and he said to Bob, in a slow drawl: "I sized you up as a friend of the Union and I'm glad you didn't go further across the bridge, because you might have got shot. That is Pike County, over thar." It was hard to restrain a smile at the man's reticence, but that is how it is in this mountain country circumscribed by violence, and soon the two men were talking freely. Most men talked freely to Bob. The man, a miner obviously, from the little blue pocks on his leathery face, told Bob of the gunfight between the thugs and the town's officials and he said, pointing to an approaching individual of medium height, slight, about twenty-two years of age, "That's our sheriff, now. Better sheriff never pulled a gun." Bob noticed that the man nearing them seemed to smile continually, though he was alone. As he moved, his vest came open and Bob saw two Smith & Wesson revolvers, one stuck into each side of his trousers. The miner rose from the bench and introduced Bob to Chief of Police Hatfield. "Friend of Fred Mooney's," he said, and Hatfield continued to smile, taking Bob's hand. "Good man, Mooney," he said, and glancing at Bob quizzically, he added, "Friend of his is friend of mine. Do anything for you, Mr. Minor?" Bob explained his purpose and Hatfield nodded, still smiling. "Shore," he said, "shore, be glad to talk to you. Might be needing some help." He took Bob to a spot on the square and said laconically, "They got the mayor here. Good man the mayor was." The young sheriff pointed to this spot and that one, telling where this man fell and the other, where one of the Felts detectives was killed by a blow over the head with a bottle, which, he said, was indeed an odd way to die. He took Bob to a little concrete box of a house that said "Town Lockup." Inside, he showed Bob two live Baldwin-

Felts men he had captured that morning and the weapons he had taken from them, two revolvers, two blackjacks made of iron nuts screwed onto hammer handles. The prisoners turned their backs on the sheriff and his guest as they approached but Bob caught a glimpse of the murder in their faces, the mouth of one a taut line over a long chin, the eyes of the other sullen with hate. "I would suggest you turn around," Hatfield said quietly, the curious yet boyish smile still on his face. "It ain't polite to turn yore backs on visitors." The two gunmen turned around.

From the sheriff and half a dozen other eye-witnesses Bob got the whole story which he told, in his article, "Wars of West Virginia," "in the language I knew best in my youth." It is a masterpiece, a classic of American reporting.

The gunmen had come with Yaller Dog papers to evict the miners who had joined the union after Mayor Testamon had declared their right to assembly. Sheriff Hatfield halted the evictions. The gangsters departed, but everybody knew they would return and there would be hell to pay. Mayor Testamen quickly deputized a dozen citizens to defend the town. "The mayor'd see a miner in the street," Hatfield related, smiling, "and he went up and says, 'Are you armed?' The miner says, 'No, I ain't.' And the Mayor says, 'Well, get armed quick!' And the miner says, 'Yes, I am,' and the Mayor deputizes him."

The thugs returned about five-thirty that afternoon with "a warrant" to arrest Sheriff Hatfield for obstructing the law when he had halted the evictions. Mayor Testamen looked at the warrant and said, "This is bogus."

"Then Albert, that was Albert Felts," the sheriff said, "draws his gun and shoots from the hip into the Mayor's stomach and then wheels quick and fires at me. The bullet misses and goes through Isaac Brewer's right lung, paralyzing his gun hand and him being a man that can't shoot with his left." As Bob got the story from a dozen others, and from the miner who had sat on the bench eyeing him when he arrived, "Sid drawed two guns, one in each hand. He put a bullet right away through Albert Felts forehead that came out the back of his neck, and then one through Cunningham's head, shooting for the head because of us being under the impression them fellows always wear a coat of nails."

When the firing ended, Mayor Testamen was dead, and

seven dead detectives lay sprawling in the streets. Four miners were wounded.

"Somebody," Bob concluded, "told me something that they said was very important, about an investigation, but I disremember what it was. When the gun-play begins again on battle-scale in Mingo and Logan, I hope you will understand how came it. And when Sid is tried for the killing of Albert Felts, I hope plenty a people will back him up for his defense, for I think he's the kind of man the world needs more of."

It was strange, Bob reflected, as he boarded the train after shaking hands warmly with Sheriff Hatfield and a group of miners, how much he felt at home here. Hatfield, so much like the cowboy hero of his youth, Wilbur, the best shot in the county. So much of Bob cottoned to the frontier quality of this West Virginia country, the fearlessness of its people, their resistance to the forces that hemmed them in, their Spartan adaptation to their environment, unafraid to fight fire with fire. Forever it was they who were charged with violence, "force and violence" as the statutes put it; but forever it was the rich man's state whose spurting gunfire obliged the men to take their rifles down from the board over the door.

Another thought tugged at his mind as he sat looking out the windows at the country where Daniel Boone had lived and died, here in these mountains. Mayor Testamen had died trying to enforce the law, the guarantees of the Constitution. The smiling sheriff, kin of the famous Hatfields, had shot it out with the gangsters of the coal companies: a mayor, a sheriff had taken the part of the coal miners. How come? Was this sheer accident? Possibly, but neither of these men were zealots in the cause of labor. There must be another reason. Was it not because they were elected by these men, felt beholden to their electorate, recognized them as the derivation of their advancement to political office? Was this not, then, a local-case history of the advantages of political action? The need of the working class to plunge into politics, seek to win the ballot as they fought, simultaneously, on all other fronts, in the trade unions, on all the theaters where the people were? Was it not necessary, hence, to include an active day-to-day participation in the electoral fight, to win, at least, the partial conquest of political office, to head toward the all-decisive question of a working class political party nationally? Mayor Testamen and Sid Hatfield

with his smoking guns was indeed an object lesson. They had been elected to office by the local party of workingmen banded together in the Democratic Party there. Hatfield, the simple, unschooled hero of the coalfields was a chosen, elected, tribune of his people, near to their aspirations, *for* them, *not* for the company gangsters. Could not other officials, in many other localities where the working class had strength, was massed together, behave similarly?

What happened here was further evidence that he had made the right choice in choosing the principles of Marxism, its indubitable wisdom in contrast to the ideas of the anarchists, the syndicalists. Yes, you must fight with every weapon at hand, not the least of which was political action.

Bob's article in the *Liberator* the next month focussed national attention on the guilty in the Cumberlands: shortly afterward the liberals sent writers into the mine fields, the New York *World,* the *Post-Dispatch,* the *Nation.* Sid Hatfield, the miners of Matewan, did not die on the gibbet.

The artist Minor turned crusader did not turn from his Muse, his first love. A figure on the public platform, orator, a by-line on the printed page, journalist, a chief voice in the direction of his magazine, editor (by January 1922), and a member of his party's national committee, it was art that evoked one of his most telling pieces of writing, and in a major way, his credo as artist. In 1922 he wrote "Man (X) His Mark," a review of an exhibit of drawings by Boardman Robinson. He loved the work of this bearded man they called Mike, whose deft crayon, too, caught "the holy struggle of man." Robinson had accompanied John Reed in 1916, illustrating their joint book, *The War in Eastern Europe.* Mike, too, was the artist as crusader, like Art Young, Maurice Becker, Hugo Gellert, Bill Gropper. Like Bob, whom all acknowledged as their peer.

The stuff of life is in this man's work, Bob felt, as he told of his days in Paris. He is passing a dinky art store where he sees a piece of paper turning yellow at the edges, torn, but it bears the name of Daumier. He stands studying the drawing, reflecting on its worth, its meaning. That drawing *is* Daumier. "It tells you to love and hope—yes, and to hate them that don't love." It tells you to live and breed and fight; "and, maybe, to die." That picture in the window is the germ of man. Signed "Daumier," which, Bob says, means "Man (X) His Mark." It

THE DYING-WAGE

gives off the "smell of the man animal. It is the trace, the spoor of man, the good, reeking odor of the camp of Man, in the trodden-down spot in the forest."

But Daumier is dead now and the hand of mankind is withering: "prostitution is on." The pictures in the Daily Lie, the Weekly Smirk, the Monthly Cash "are printed with the pus from the sores of Job."

Man, in this art, has become "a suit of pants and a coat." One becomes sick and torpid and can't remember what Man is. "Who can respect pants and a vest" now that the holy, sweating bones and muscles are gone out of them, What thoughts stirred the feeble cervix that conceived these still-born pictures. "Was it $185 a week. A Buick, A flat on Riverside: A cabaret?" Civilization of the dollar has paralyzed "the art-loins of man."

But Bob is not one who can endure such a picture of Man long: he rebels at the idea even as he expresses it. Man growls, roars, yells his love. "Mankind begins to draw again, in *these* pictures of Robinson's." The senses come alive, they breathe, see, feel all there is of life. Again we smell sweat and blood, stemming from a piece of paper." Muscles stretch and pull again, the backbones bend, the loins ache and feel, on morsels of paper that grip into your heart. "Mankind makes his mark again. Mankind signs it: B. Robinson."

You see what Bob, as artist, sees in Robinson's art: "Spots of black placed holily in spaces. There are gray fields of beautiful proportion; soft gray, bleak white, desperate black, struggling in a frame as man struggles in the world."

One need not describe each drawing: they are all about the same thing, each is a miniature of the world. All that man has hoped and thought is in all of them and that is what any real picture is. "Life is struggling with death." That is all any picture is about. The figures may have been those of Clemenceau or a little man named Wilson, whoever the actors, whoever the subjects, the content is "the fight of forces." That is the only theme any true artist ever knew. "No picture was ever painted to any other theme, no poem was ever written to another, no music came from any other inspiration."

B. Robinson is not only a man, one single man. When he draws he is just the hand of us—our drawing hand. "*We* did these pictures. All of us know it, when we look at them and they look back at us."

But there is, he says, the perpetual striving for the better, the best. It is not given to man to be satisfied. This strong drawing hand strikes boldly and puts down beauty upon paper the best that can be done in the midst of this debauched life. But this man has a vision, there will be a time of man's glory. "When B. Robinson is soaked into the earth again, and I am dead and you, too, are rotting in the earth where Daumier is, even young kids will draw better." That will be the day when Mankind's body is cured and all a-throbbing again, and Broadway, and Park Row, and cravenness, and the stink of the art stores, are gone into history. "For the present, B. Robinson is the best we can do."

So Bob wrote, his pen catching the imagery of his drawings. He is that unique artist who has mastered more than one expression, who can stride easily down all the avenues of communication—writer, artist, speaker. There is stuff in him of Leonardo da Vinci who painted and could draw plans of flying machines, of ships that can swim under water, who was at home in the politics of his time, a many-faceted man, like so many of the Renaissance. Like the forefathers of our own land, men like Ben Franklin who printed, drew the electricity from the skies, wrote, and could conceive of lending libraries, better trash wagons, and volunteer fire departments.

Bob was, as writer, a formost master of the art of reportage: he worked the instant, the scene that he saw, into the framework of the time's principal political, social, economic factors. His eye unerringly caught those particulars that contained the general.

The artist in him could reproduce the sight, smell, the very taste of a moment, of a scene in which he stood, and, in capturing that moment, the political thinker could convey the hour, the day, the time we live in. The miners of Matewan did not only live in the mountains of West Virginia: the stuff in them, their hardly rebelliousness, their courage against seemingly overwhelming odds, was the stuff of all workingmen in the land, all workingmen everywhere. His was no interest in the bizarre, the unique, the accidental: he searched for, and found, in each scene, in each man, the universal, the essence of the time. Life had purpose; causes created effects; everywhere the dying fought the living; in everything there was "the fight of forces."

'Comrade'

AND NOWHERE, in the hot and wide-flung battleground where men strove against each other in the timeless war of the classes was "the fight of forces" more apparent than in the America after the world war. The year Bob returned from the Revolution in Russia, 1919, from the tragic uprising of the Spartakists, from his own imprisonment in the Rhineland fortress more than four million workers had gone on strike, more by far than in any previous year of the nation's history.

The change from production for war to that of peace had strained the machinery of capitalism: almost six million workers got the sack, a severe economic crisis descended on the land. The employers' general staff determined to unload the burden of depression upon the workers, enlisted courts, pulpits, newspapers, gunmen, municipal governments, and the national government into a single charging phalanx. This was the time to smash the union, gentlemen, smash it, smash it. And the workers retaliated, going into battle in wave after wave against their mighty enemy. The workingmen struck without the aid of their generalissimos, their foremost trade union officers. The Gompers hierarchy was loose-jawed with consternation at the savage offensive of the employers. Gone from the paunchy leaders of the American Federation of Labor was the taste for combat, their energies, zeal, loyalty, sapped by years of easy life on fat salaries. There were exceptions in some battle spots, some districts, but G.H.Q. only hampered the energies of the members, accommodating itself to the arrogance of the employers and the employers' government. Yet the strikes continued to spread like fire in the dry, dead leaves of depression. Where you went in the country those days of 1919, 1920, 1921, you would feel the scorching blaze. The open-shop offensive was to

reach its furious climax in 1922 when the Atlantic coast seamen went out, the printers left their linotypes, stones and presses; the carpenters, masons, the men of the building trades climbed down from their scaffoldings; the packinghouse men left the squealing pigs and lowing steer in the stockyards. the weavers of New England abandoned their clattering looms. When 400,000 railroad shopmen struck against a series of wage cuts decreed by the Railroad Labor Board, President Harding, not the genial, whiskey-swilling hail-fellow-well-met now, but a ruthless executive of the ruling class, roared that he would use every means at his disposal to break that strike. Attorney General Daugherty asked and received a power that exceeded the massed cannon of Napoleon Bonaparte: a federal injunction, that virtually outlawed the railroadmen's strike which was broken, by September.

By the close of 1922 about ten million workingmen had struck. But the employers had succeeded in crippling or annihilating the unions in steel, meat packing, lumber and maritime. Organized labor was weakened, the AFL losing over a million of its four millions. Yes, "the fight of forces." And no few in America believed the force of the capitalist state was overwhelming, an irresistible juggernaut.

But as the wise men of labor have said, no strike is ever lost, not truly, if the defeat is plumbed, studied, understood, the lessons absorbed. Experience breeds wisdom, Bob thought, reflecting on the scene, and wisdom is the ability to avoid making the same mistake twice. Wasn't that how the old saw went? There were those who were drawing lessons. His party, most of all, young, inexperienced, aware that it must make mistakes. Men who act must not fear to make mistakes. To catch the error, to recognize it, admit and correct it, that was the earmark of his party.

It was learning. That he knew as he heard the debate in the leading councils, in the branches, and he joined that debate.

From the moment he joined his party he was a Party Man. In today's climate that concept conjures up, for those who do not know, a man who is no longer his own master, but one in an anonymous, will-less aggregation, a cell in a jellyfish.

Bob, as Communist, was himself, but he was always more. His party, he felt, fructified him, made a man bigger than he was. He had his own strength, plus. Plus the concerted thought,

experience, wisdom, of many, the organized extension of the old proverb that two heads are better than one.

Bob became not only a member, his natural gifts brought him to the fore as a leader. And politics was the breath of his life. He breathed its air deeply as he traveled the land, writing, speaking, drawing, organizing. It was not enough to draw and to illustrate reality, nor was it enough to write and to explain; nor was it even enough to speak his heart and his mind from the dais and to win people's minds; there had to be an end result for him, the recruitment of warriors into the ranks of his political cause who would, without stint, strive for the general advancement. Many in his party said, in these days when it is obliged to live partially "underground" as the sleuths sniffed and hunted and jailed, "agitation was not enough." The eloquent advocacy of Socialism could not be the totality of its effort: the party must regain its connection with the people and engage in every aspect of social life: in the trade unions, in the electoral fights, in the newspapers, must be wherever workingmen and workingwomen are.

Yet success for that major portion of mankind, the working class, that labored for the common good and without which modern society was inconceivable, that victory could not be attained save through the selfless work of zealous protagonists, en masse, the van of their class. That van required a daily, steady, year-in and year-out association with the masses of the land, and with the masses of the world, drawing strength from their strength, wisdom from the common wisdom, and returning to them a program of action that was based upon the generalized experience of the working class. To give them wisdom one must learn from them. He, his party, was learning.

He had learned, for example, from the dissatisfaction of his audiences when he spoke against intervention. His listeners had, as it were, thrust him toward the Marxist classics, pushed the books into his hand, obliging him to learn, as he said in "I Change My Mind a Little."

He looked around him in the party branch to which he belonged, studied the faces and listened to the words of the members. They had come, defying the political terror that lay like a fog over the city, to talk, study. learn and to agree on a course of action. They had to meet in out-of-the-way rooms, the curtains drawn. How often, Bob mused, curtains had to be

drawn in his time as he remembered the first meeting of the San Francisco unionists that formed the committee to save Tom Mooney. Yes, the age of the drawn curtain.

There was love in him as he regarded the plain faces, heard the rough-hewn words, the working class faces agleam with the confidence that their class and their cause would not fail. He paid his dues into his branch, faithfully, made certain that he did not fall into arrears during his absences when he traveled. He adhered to its rules, its by-laws, tried to attend every meeting when he was not on the road. The branch to him was sacred, the life-cell of the organism, it must be nurtured, respected, loved. And often the chairman in shirtsleeves, a needle trades worker, a middle-aged man of simple eloquence, called upon Comrade Bob to tell what he had seen on his last trip. Comrade Bob relished talking to them, watching their up-turned faces, thrived on their pride which he could read in their faces, their joy in this man who drew so beautifully and who wrote and spoke as beautifully as he drew. His people, his family, brothers, sisters, Comrades.

He reveled, too, in the company of the leaders of his family, the men and women chosen to propose policy and to guide the members in its execution. These were the Americans who had founded the party, the most stalwart and far-sighted of all who had been in the Socialist Party and in the Wobblies. Able, selfless men like Charles E. Ruthenberg, a tall, bald-headed, deliberate man whom Bob knew as a gifted political thinker and organizer out of the Midwest. The two became fast friends. Ruthenberg, thoughtful, slow to speak, had gone to prison for opposing World War I. He had a unique gift for the tactics and strategy of electoral combat, had caught the imagination of many thousands in Ohio where he led many Socialist campaigns for political office. Bob felt the man's probity, sincerity, unusual intelligence, and had, in fact, known his name for years. His was a clear voice in the dark of the emergency, anti-war convention of the Socialist Party in St. Louis, April of 1917 which Bob knew by now was a decisive turning-point of that party. Ruthenberg, a principal founder (its general secretary until his death) of the Communist Party, a tireless student of the Marxist classics, inspired in Bob the desire to know those classics thoroughly as a guide to understanding and to deed. His influence, perhaps of all the leaders, was greatest on Bob

who learned much from him of the art of electoral combat.

Bill Foster, a titan of American labor, the leader of the 1919 steel strike who stood at its helm despite public storm and gunmen's bullets when twenty-three of his associates were murdered by the employers in the nation's basic industry, was reading the Marxist classics, studying them, soon to be in the party.

Another was John Reed, author of *Ten Days That Shook the World,* whose work Bob admired long before he met the young, gifted writer on that visit to New York, in 1912, who was soon to be the most renowned war correspondent of his day. Bob found his old idol in the party, the great leader of the I.W.W., Big Bill Haywood, a one-eyed giant of a miner, in whose cause, during the famous trial in 1907, Bob had walked the streets of St. Louis distributing leaflets, his first political act, arguing with all who would listen.

Many other incorruptible men Bob met, like Jack Johnstone, leader together with Foster of the Packinghouse Workers strike of 1918 who had striven mightily to prevent the race riots of 1919 by organizing a march of 25,000 Negro and white workers through the stockyard area at the crucial moment to urge sanity and fraternity; Joseph Manley, Alexander Bittelman, Ella Reeve Bloor, Alexander Trachtenberg, J. Louis Engdahl, and a host of others whose names Bob knew as opponents of opportunism in the Socialist Party.

He understood by now, the logic of the social forces that brought his party into being. It was as inevitable, in the America of its day, as the birth of the Jefferson party at the turn of the nineteenth century or the Republican Party in the middle of that century, in 1853. The Communist movement was as American as his Texas plains.

Daumier's Chained Men

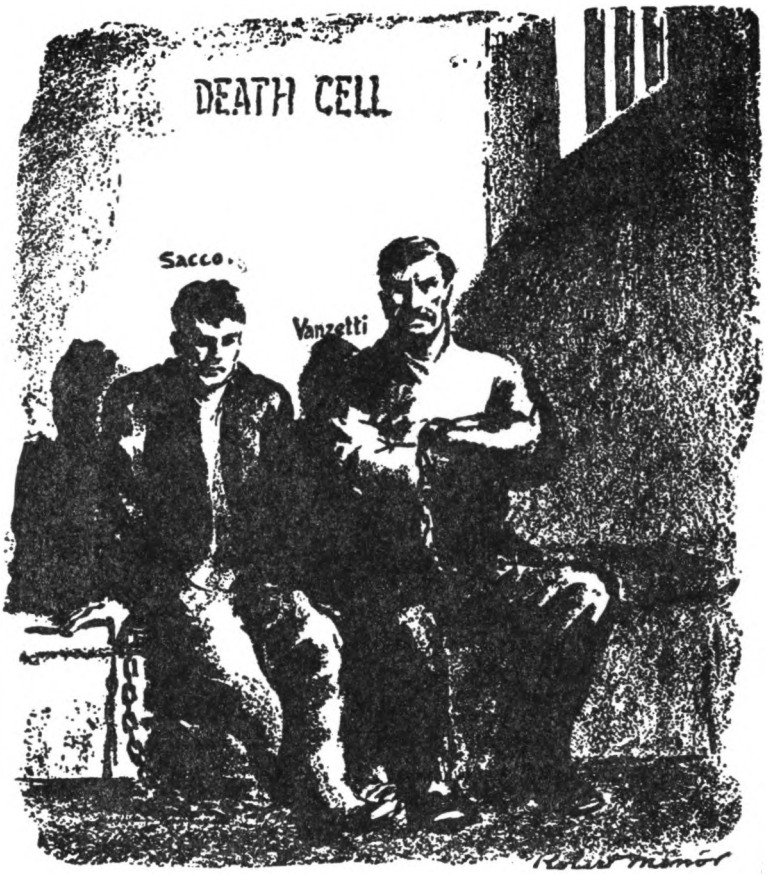
A DAUMIER print hung on Bob's wall, his favorite. A man of noble face, great eyes, a heavy moustache, lies on the prison stones of a cell, chained by heavy links to a wall. A political prisoner. Something in his face speaks of a will as strong as chains, stronger. A single sunbeam streams into the dark, bare cell as though Daumier is saying there will be light. Yes, sons of labor, there will be light, Bob's credo as it was the old Communard's, and no issue of the *Liberator* these days passed without his outcry on behalf of workingmen in prison.

And the list was long, growing longer daily as the strikes swept on; the workingmen, asking bread, were given chains, like Daumier's man. Many of the editorials, unsigned, were Bob's: you recognized his style, as though he had signed his name to them. His crusading fervor on behalf of Mooney never diminished, and the times were enchaining new Mooneys every day.

Warren Billings, he writes in the August 1923 issue, was presented a silver bugle which he is learning to play in his cell at Folsom.

"The irony hurts," Bob cries. "Is this all we can do for our political prisoners?" Billings, he reminds the reader, took a life sentence quietly, "it might well have been the gallows," rather than to escape "by the slightest evasion that might have hurt Mooney's defense." "And what do we do about it. We give Billings a silver cornet." And, Bob roars, "For God's sake, blow it, Billings, blow it!"

The next week he traveled to Boston, to Charleston jail, to see Bartolomeo Vanzetti, Nicola Sacco. A trusty moved a tin bucket in a distant corner of the jail and the sound echoed through the concrete "like the yelping of a thousand iron coyotes." The smell is like that of an ill-kept bathroom and



Bob thinks that a human being living year by year in this place could think of nothing but how to get out. And here came Vanzetti. Bob did not recognize him from the photographs he had seen. Why this man is a tall, soft-eyed peasant with a big, bushy mustache, walking in the stone corridors as though he were still in a wheat field.

Vanzetti took both Bob's hands in his, smiling beautifully, saying in his heavy musical accent that he had known Bob through his drawings and writings for years. This is Daumier's

man walking through the frame. Bob began to talk of Vanzetti's case and the tall, mild-eyed peasant seemed surprised, perhaps a mite impatient. Was that all Bob had come to talk about? Vanzetti seemed to want to get to another subject, and soon it comes out. "And tell me, Comrade Bob, what is happening in Rooshia," They talked and the prisoner asked many questions, of liberty in the new country, how did the workers live, what manner of man was Lenin, the others, and Bob replied, thoughtfully, describing his own experiences and his own political evolution to the cause of Communism.

Vanzetti warmed to Bob as they sat on the hard, stiff chairs, the bars bisecting the patch of light on the floor. He spoke to Bob of his own life, his own political evolution: one of the most pious of Roman Catholics, he had, as a child, won a prize for proficiency in the catechism, and smiling under his bush of a mustache he told how he fought a fist fight for Jesus when a young neighbor scoffed at His divinity. In America the immigrant took so big a part in strikes that businessmen put detectives to work to quench the fire in that heart. A crime had to be attached to Vanzetti, to get him into the iron prison where the electric chair is. It was duly arranged; a sufficient number of witnesses were hired and coached. And here sat Vanzetti in the shadow of the chair.

Bob described his visit in a review of a pamphlet Vanzetti wrote, *The Story of a Proletarian Life.* Through it, he said, runs a strain of "rather too great soft-heartedness, and a bewildering modesty in assertion of faith." He quoted Vanzetti: "I am," the prisoner wrote, "and I will be until the last instant (unless I should discover that I am in error) an anarchist-communist, because I believe that communism is the most humane form of social contract, because I know that only with liberty can man rise, become noble, and complete."

There it is, Bob concluded, "with all its strength and weakness. The writer of this catechism did not shoot down two men to steal a payroll."

It was inevitable, of course, that "the law" would try to imprison Bob, too. The authorities kept a worried eye on the Communists, hired stoolpigeans galore to find the pretext for the frame-up. The Reds were making progress, too god-damn much headway. The Communist movement was breaking out of the

isolation into which the Palmer Red Raids had driven it. The Workers Party had formulated a program of struggle for the everyday needs of the masses which was capturing the loyalty of tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, in labor. It had a three-pronged goal: amalgamation of all trade unions into industrial unions; the formation of a labor party; and the recognition of Soviet Russia. Communists advocated these issues through the Trade Union Educational League, a united front organization headed by Foster. The slogans "Amalgamation or Annihilation," "Amalgamation and a Labor Party" and "Recognition of Soviet Russia," rang through the entire labor movement during the twenty-four months of 1922 and 1923.

The rank-and-file of the trade unions understood well enough that disunity in their ranks enabled the employers to conquer them, beat down their bitterly-contested strikes. Sixteen international unions endorsed amalgamation, like the Railway Clerks, the Maintenance of Way Workers, the Typographical union. Seventeen state federations of labor that included Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Washington expressed themselves in favor; so did scores of large city central bodies and trade union councils, as well as 3,377 locals in railroad alone. The Gompers craft union hierarchs were frantic.

Similarly, there was success in the advocacy of a Labor Party. The Trade Union Educational League, in March of 1923, conducted a national referendum on the matter, addressing itself to 35,000 local unions of the AFL and the railroad brotherhoods. Despite the unending opposition of reactionary leaders, seven thousand locals answered the League—favorably. Many more who did not notify the TUEL responded affirmatively.

The need to recognize the Soviet Union, forestall another war, was passionately endorsed by countless thousands in labor. Many internationals like the coal miners, the locomotive engineers, the machinists, hundreds of central bodies, declared their support, realizing that their employers were slavering to destroy the workers' state as they were bent on destroying the workers' unions here, at home. War, by God, didn't we have our bellies full of it?

An alarmed Administration in Washington watched the influence of the Workers' Party rise, knew that many thousands

saw good in the TUEL which contained the gifted corps of Communist leaders from the trade unions, like Foster, Jack Johnstone, many others. Terror had not frozen them, more arrests had to be scheduled. More, more.

Through a stoolpigeon, the sleuths of the Federal Bureau of Investigation knew the Communist leaders were meeting at Bridgeman, in Michigan. On August 22, 1922, a posse of Michigan police and FBI agents raided the assembly as the convention was ending. Seventeen were arrested; indictments were drawn up for forty more. Violation of the Michigan criminal syndicalist law was the charge; specifically it was "unlawful assembly." Bob was one of the forty the authorities hunted.

The trials were to be held in St. Joseph, Michigan, beginning in February 1923. Each of the defendants demanded, and secured, a separate trial under the state law. Meanwhile a defense movement formed of considerable breadth, comprising individuals of various walks in life, of various faiths and trade union affiliations, like Eugene V. Debs; the Catholic priest, Father John A. Ryan; Roger N. Baldwin of the Civil Liberties Union; former U.S. Attorney under Wilson, Francis Fisher Kane, of Philadelphia. Frank P. Walsh, a prominent lawyer of the time, headed the defense counsel. The Chicago Federation of Labor and other trade union groups evidenced their sympathies for the defendants.

Foster, the man the authorities and the employers feared most, was first to be tried. Bob arrived in town, a defendant, walked into the musty courtroom and sat down cupping an ear to listen. His pencil ran furiously over his pad as he heard the prosecutor ask the prospective jurymen: "Do you realize that the Declaration of Independence is no part of the law of this land?" He sat bolt upright when he heard the jurymen reply, "Yes." Nine farmers finally sat on the jury, one railroad flagman who had never joined a union, one grocery clerk, and the wife of a factory superintendent. All knew, of course, that the Declaration of Independence was no part of the nation's law. "Do you believe that the Government should protect accumulated surpluses of private property?" the prosecutor asked the grocer's clerk, "in a tone of voice," Bob wrote, "that conjures up visions of hordes of bolsheviks busting in windows and running off with hams and pianos."

"Ten of us who had been indicted with Foster, but who

had not been arrested," Bob said in his article, "came to Michigan last Saturday to offer ourselves for trial."

There was something almost comic as they walked into the astonished courtroom in the fresh of morning, with spring smiling prematurely outside the window. The news of their arrival spread, and the staff of William J. Burns who headed the Federal Bureau of Investigation and whose assistant was a young man named J. Edgar Hoover began to hold a convention at the courtroom door, staring, and glowering, "oh so desperately disappointed at our arrival," Bob wrote. He supposed that many of them were making a living "looking" for the indicted men and would have to do something else "now that they insisted on being 'found'."

The government, through Attorney General Daugherty, had assured protesting liberals that it had no part in the Michigan prosecution. They were being tried under the state criminal syndicalist law, had broken no federal law. But it was obvious that the federal government poured funds into the case to put Foster behind bars. Before the Bridgman jury was picked, President Harding had expressed his intention to eliminate the TUEL from the American Federation of Labor where its influence was fast growing. "Trade unionists," Bob said, "were astonished to hear the frank admission to stamp out the movement for the amalgamation of trade unions into industrial unions, and this prosecution was one of its weapons." Daugherty, who had pledged the whole power of the government to impose the Open Shop upon all of America by using the railroad injunction the previous autumn, "made his second move here, in remote Bridgeman, to nip in the bud the movement toward amalgamation."

The government agents advised the state authorities in strategy. To "get" Foster they stripped the charges of the most flagrantly outrageous ones, the advocacy of crime, sabotage, violence, as a means of accomplishing industrial or political reform. Gone also was the charge of editing, issuing or circulating any book, paper, document, or written matter which teaches such doctrine. The sole charge was assembly, unlawful assembly. Guilt carried ten years in prison.

A cartoon Bob had drawn in the magazine *Labor Herald,* which Foster edited, was handed in as evidence. It showed a great number of railroad trains plunging into a vast chasm

This, the prosecutor said, waving the cartoon aloft, "advocated sabotage, the wrecking of trains." The official neglected to explain that at the bottom of the abyss were the large words, "Open Shop," obviously intending to show, if explanation is required, the disaster impending to railroad workers should the corporations crush the labor unions and drive them into the non-union open-shop system. "The jury, the prosecutor hoped," Bob wrote, "would not know the difference between an open shop and an open switch."

There was consternation at the prosecutor's desk when the jury returned to announce that it could not agree on a verdict. It was hung: six to six. The democratic instinct of the people asserted itself. One of the jury, Mrs. Minerva Olson said: "Many of us here don't see anything in all this newspaper talk about foreigners and secret activities. My uncle was a member of the Cumberland scouts in the Civil War. But who were his ancestors? Weren't they supposed to be the cast-offs of Europe? Indeed, what organization doesn't do its business in secret, whether it be a political party or a corporation? In the last few days there has been a great change of sentiment here. A number of neighbors have telephoned me telling of their own change."

The senior class of Benton Harbor's high school held a mock trial of Foster, on the same charge the state had brought.

The youngsters brought in a verdict for acquittal in less than twenty minutes.

Chagrined that Foster had won his freedom, the government redoubled its effort to get other leaders of the party. C. E. Ruthenberg, the national executive secretary of the party, was to be tried next. After him, the other leaders, including Bob. The Burns dicks, the D. of J. sleuths, browbeat, bribed, made headlines in the newspapers to whip up public sentiment. Ruthenberg was found "guilty." A founder of the Communist Party, its secretary since its birth, a man of singular devotion to the working class, he was to serve three to ten years in the state penitentiary, at Jackson, Mich., one of the oldest and cruelest prisons in the land. A man of unflagging energy, unsparing of himself, he neglected, too long, an attack of appendicitis, and he died, at 45.

A political loss of first magnitude to the entire movement, his death was a profound personal loss to Bob. He had treasured

his friendship with this gifted Ohioan who had taught him much.

Before Ruthenberg died, his conviction was challenged through the courts, while he was out on bail. He died while his case was still before the United States Supreme Court.

But times were changing in America, resistance of the workers was blunting the sharp, naked edge of the government's sword and slowly, by degrees, the worst of the terror lifted. The authorities in Michigan did not relish a vista of endless Communist trials and the consequent turmoils, in labor, in the public at large, and they finally dropped the matter. In 1934, a New Deal attorney-general in Michigan quashed the indictments altogether.

But not before Bob, and his movement, had made the issue clear to many: this was a trial of ideas, the persecution of Americans not for any deed, but for the thoughts in their heads. Bob's unusual ability to strip a case of its legal verbiage and show the core of political persecution revealed itself in his articles and speeches. He sat up nights, cross-legged on the floor, the legal books spread about him, thinking, learning, storing up a remarkable fund of knowledge in these matters that were to make him a leader among leaders in the crusade for a people's rights.

William Z. Foster

The Judge. Charles G. White

"You see here a sketch of Foster's lean, bald head; but it's a big and hairy lion of a man, figuratively speaking, that's being presented to the jury."

—From Minor's article reporting the trial of Foster, which he illustrated.

—*The Liberator,* April 1923

Lydia

In 1922 the Workers Party moved its national headquarters from New York to Chicago, to the vast midland. The proletarians here had passed through experience that brought them a clearer understanding of the social and political mysteries of the time, more so perhaps, than the workers elsewhere in the land. Men who were now Communists had led the great stockyard strikes of a few years back, Jack Johnstone, Joe Manley, and the epic steel strike made the name of Bill Foster a banner in cities like nearby Gary, Hammond, East Chicago where the steel mills stretched mile on mile in an empire of smoke. Here the Negro populace of Chicago's South Side had multiplied manifold during the exodus from Dixie.

Bob favored the change, was glad to go despite his love for New York, its teeming streets and outpouring of people from everywhere. Chicago sat at the threshold of the nation's industry, center of a realm of factory cities: Akron, Toledo, Duluth, Milwaukee, Cleveland. . . .

With him went his bride Lydia Gibson Minor whom he first met some seven years before when he came to San Francisco (in tennis shoes and black alpaca coat). They had met often then, and she admired his enormous gift as artist, his fire as speaker and writer and she had lingered on the pages that carried his by-line through the intervening years.

When he returned from Moscow, pale now, gaunt, from the illness he had contracted while visiting the famine-stricken countryside there, he had met her again. Their friendship ended in marriage.

They made an astonishingly handsome couple, this woman of grace, unassuming beauty and quiet courage whose luminous eyes could light up in gaiety or flash in fire, for she, like Bob,

had that incandescent quality that came from sheer joy in being alive, walking under the sun, spending their life for a cause greater than themselves

They had much in common. She was an artist of attainment, a sensitive poet whose drawings and verse had appeared frequently in the old *Masses.* Daughter of an old New York family, her father a noted architect, she had become a crusader herself, for women's rights, carrying the banner in demonstrations of the suffragettes. These marches and turbulent meetings brought her in touch with the rebels of the arts, and she had begun to submit her poems to the *Masses,* not because of its political views, but because of the throbbing art she found in its pages. Later she met working class leaders and came to see that those who would lock women in the kitchen and nursery were also those who robbed most of mankind of its due. During her years in San Francisco she drew for working class periodicals and met the band of left-wingers where the movement originated to free Tom Mooney. As artist she had accompanied Bob when he visited Vanzetti in Charleston Prison and her drawing of the martyr appeared in the *Liberator.*

She was not a Communist and Bob spent much of his honeymoon reading to her the works of Lenin that he found so magnificently illuminating. It is conceivable that many a bride would have resented her groom's passionate absorption with the books, but she was a reader, too. She was of a generation that consumed everything Ibsen and Shaw wrote, she read avidly all the books of poetry that she could find. She had already read her husband's favorite, Mark Twain, all his works, and she had a trunkful of the current novels, tracts and pamphlets on factory reform, like those of Jane Addams. She knew Lincoln Steffens' muckraking books virtually as well as Bob did. But her favorite book was an edition of Leonardo da Vinci's *Notebook* and illustrations to which she came time and time again, and Bob read with her, as enthusiastic as she was over the old Renaissance titan.

And now Lydia came to know the works of Lenin for Bob brought home a copy of *Imperialism* with the ardor another swain might carry a bouquet of roses to his love. He discussed its ideas with her in his characteristic passion, his face aglow. It was good to watch him. He brought her his thoughts, his plans, his dreams, and her frank questions and sympathetic

understanding inspired him, then, and throughout their marriage to the day he died.

He was a thoughtful, considerate mate, and she learned that this two-fisted fighting man was oddly tender in his regard for friends. There was that letter she received from Bob, off on a journey then, telling her that his old St. Louis friend, Dr. Leo Caplan died. "Leo, the best friend I ever had." This man whom he loved as a brother was a man of great patience "and terrible when he wasn't patient." He was solemn and simple to the point of being ridiculous, almost too modest to be useful, "had to be persuaded, like a baby, before he would assume any authority." He took himself too seriously, laughed little, smiled seldom. "You would plan a day to make him smile." Leo loved quietly, almost silently, nearly everybody. "And, he could hate more terribly than anybody I ever knew. In fact, I think this last capacity clinched and sealed forever his being my brother."

"I give you my word that I saw him in battles in Berlin, though he was never there. I saw him in the *Vorwarts* office when that building was being cannonaded by Ebert's troops. I saw him dead in the gutter when the revolution was killed. I think I see him sitting near me when I talk on a very delicate point, or whenever I decide to give away something. That is because he loved more than any other human, that is, any single individual, that I ever knew. It is nothing definite—it is only the feel of him. There is love in every battle."

So he revered Leo because his friend was a man of love and hence of hate. Like Bob, Lydia thought. Yes, one who loves deeply hates deeply. And Bob was a hater. She understood the inspiration for his savage caricatures of those who fattened their bankrolls on the tragedy of war. Bob caught them in his cartoons and in his writings like a naturalist catches a fat bug on a pin.

She saw that every fibre of her man was involved in his work, his ideas, and early she became accustomed, as they sketched their drawings in the same studio, together, he at one end of the room, she at the other, to his grimaces and contortions and mutterings when he was getting down on paper these men or these forces that he fought. He went at his work like a knight in battle on a charger. She learned not to start when he would scramble to his feet, raise his fist, surveying it ferociously, while he was at work on such cartoons as "The Exodus from

Dixie," perhaps his greatest. In it you see a caravan of Negroes, men, women, the aged and the young, trekking northward from the flames of burning crosses on which men hung. One of the figures, a giant in overalls and a cap, looks back, his fist raised in a pledge of revenge. As Bob surveyed his own fist to get the exact bend and line onto paper, he was that Negro, staring back at the Kluxist flames that ate men. He, her man, she thought, was Man.

But though his work was his life, so much so that he found in it all the diversion, entertainment he needed, working with such intensity that the walls could crumble around him without distracting him an instant, there was nothing of the Calvinist in him, Lydia reflected.

The man who was ready to face a firing squad in the cellars at Coblenz for his beliefs, was putty in the hands of children. Then his essential tenderness possessed him. Often on visits to friends whose young scurried about the room in tumult, he joined the children, as often as not scrambling on the floor with them, later telling them stories, wonderful tales, she overheard, of little green men, of fairies and talking animals, his voice falling into a mumbling, story-teller's tone. They worshipped this big, balding man with the bright eyes. The most unruly would end up with their elbows on his knees, staring solemnly into his face as he spun his wonderful yarns. It was a quality that stayed with him through all the years, even the worst, crammed as every day was with tension and struggle. His artist's eye reveled in the children's fresh beauty and Lydia often found him drawing sketches for them, darting glances at the children from beneath his bushy eyebrows. "Uncle Bob" had innumerable nephews and nieces who adopted him as their own.

Lydia found that the primary interests of her life flowed into the mainstream of Bob's and though she, like Bob, was gregarious, the work they had to do overtook them. They went rarely to a movie, once in a blue moon when some new film of Chaplin's opened, or some outstanding movie came from abroad. So with music, concerts. He was content to play his favorite records, the New World Symphony of Dvorak's, especially, over and over again, endlessly. Occasionally he played a Bach whose severe melodic architecture he admired. There was no time for sports, but he would often walk the two miles from his home in Croton-on-the-Hudson to the station, observing

the life in the trees, the woods of elm and oak and maple, the change of color in the autumn and spring, halting a moment to survey the grand sweep of the Hudson valley. Sometimes, in a rare spare hour, he accompanied Lydia to the art museums, or of natural history, fascinated by the work of the ancient Etruscans, or the Assyrian bas-reliefs, or the reproduction of paintings by the mysterious cavemen of France, and most of all, by the bones of prehistoric monsters.

His interest in newspapers was enormous; he remained, a big part of him, a newspaperman all his days. He regarded daily journalism as the most immediate way of talking to the masses of men. As he read he methodically marked the columns with a red and blue pencil which he always carried, underscoring some passages in red, others in blue, and occasionally Lydia heard a snort of disgust at an editorial, or at a cartoon which he called false, "the bones gone from it."

Then he would, in his quick, almost convulsive motion, sweep the newspaper away, and if he had no piece to write or speech to prepare or cartoon to draw, dive into his books. She watched him when she looked up from her own books or work, as he sat late into the night, often until dawn, studying Russian, German, French, reading the books in the originals, for he had an unusual aptitude for language, for anything, it seemed, that would communicate the ideas of man. He compared the translations of Lenin to seek out the nuances of key passages, and Lydia saw him become one of the most accomplished scholars of Marxism in the movement. Often near dawn, he would fall asleep at his studies, his big head drooping to his chest, and Lydia would tip-toe over, throw a blanket over his shoulders, steal his book from his lap. Together, they lived the full day.

The Black Ten Million

CHICAGO BROILED under the prairie sun when Bob and Lydia arrived. He went around to pay his respects to Ed Nockels and John Fitzpatrick, leaders of the Chicago Federation of Labor who had known him well from the days they pitched in on Mooney's behalf. They talked long hours about the unions, the mood of the workers, the politics of the metropolis, and the prospects for a Farmer-Labor party, an aspect of the party's program in which Bob pioneered as a close associate of Foster's and Ruthenberg's.

He made it a point to drop in and see a working class artist who drew for the AFL papers, a sign painter as he had once been, a quiet, handsome man named Fred Ellis who had a refreshing twist of phrase and observation. Bob threw his arms around Ellis, whose work he had followed, regarding him with affection, a man of rare gift who could catch the power and humanity of a workingman and get it down on paper.

The Chicago artist venerated Bob, "the daddy of them all," as he said, foremost of America's cartoonists. He solicited Bob's criticism and it came readily in a friendly torrent of apt observation. Fred tried to get too much detail into his drawings, Bob felt. Strip the cartoons of everything extraneous, he advised, get at the essence, invest it with mood, action, so that the meaning is unmistakeable, the emotion compelling. He rejoiced at the rapidity with which Fred caught on, this workingman who had fallen from a high scaffold not long before and who had willed his recovery though virtually every bone in his body was broken. Bob reveled in Fred's quality, both as a man who fought his way back to life when many another would have let himself die, and as further testimony to Bob's beliefs in the inexhaustible talent of the working class. He proposed, to his fellow leaders of his party, that they bring Fred, if he would come, to be

the cartoonist for the *Worker,* which was then a weekly paper. When, a year later, it became a daily, Fred was its cartoonist destined to become renowned as a proletarian artist throughout the world.

Chicago was many things to Bob, but as he ranged its endless streets, studied its people and its politics, he found himself drawn increasingly to the teeming, desolate quarters where the Negroes lived in the South Side. He took an apartment there, and came to know his neighbors, their lives, their problems.

Their problems were his, his party's. He was studying the Marxist writings on the question of national minorities, of nationality, nationhood. And the Negroes, he sensed quickly, were in their majority, not only workingmen, and southern peasants, sharecroppers. They had special, unique burdens to bear.

Bob, the other Communist leaders, had a long way to go to shoulder their way through the national ignorance and prejudice on this question. The pre-war Marxist spokesmen here displayed a tragic lethargy on this matter of crucial concern. Even Eugene Debs failed to understand that that issue of full freedom for Negroes—now—was one of life-and-death importance to labor. Time and time again the employers broke strikes by dividing the workingmen on the matter of color. The official Socialist Party argued that the trials and sufferings of Negroes would halt only when Socialism triumphed. Tragic, yes, but inevitable, and the trade unions need not cope with it. Consequently few Negroes saw in Marxism a solution to the orgies of lynching and discrimination they suffered *here* and *now.* It is well and good to talk of Utopia, brother, even struggle for it, but my children are being branded *here* and *now!* The Negroes expected struggle on this score, here and now. And, becoming workingmen in the big industrial cities in the great exodus from the south during and after the war, they discovered new ways of struggle. They had begun to march. Would their white brothers join the march? Well, they would see and judge accordingly.

Bob sensed some of this as he began to speak on the streets of the South Side. True, some whites had joined: men like Jack Johnstone, now a Communist leader, led the 25,000 Negroes and whites through the back streets of the stockyards, denouncing the race riots during the 1919 horror. Foster's leadership in the steel strike inspired Negroes as well as whites

to understand and share their common lot. The founding resolutions of the young Communist movement dealt with the Negro issue in a new way, emphasizing, for the first time, the special need to focus attention on the atrocities one-tenth of our people undergo. But action, fruitful action, lagged.

Bob went to the Negro communities, listened to their questions, and learned their history. And it must have been that they sensed his awareness. They gathered on the street corners and listened to him. Many abandoned the other groups across the street or down the way where the orators, plentiful those days, talked solely of salvation in the hereafter or, like the followers of Marcus Garvey, of salvation by emigration to far-off Africa.

Bob came often, increasingly, once a week, then twice and often three times, with his handful of associates, Lydia among them, to set up their speakers' platform. Bob would mount it, rigging up a big map of Africa, or of the South, to illustrate his talks. And the crowds grew.

Word went down from headquarters to watch this man, Minor, and police sauntered away from the other speakers to nose around the crowd around Bob. He talked on as though no bluecoat existed, ignoring them so completely that they were nonplussed. One night, as the crowd grew so large that some stepped beyond the perimeter the policemen felt was enough for them, a nervous rookie of a cop tried to break up the meeting. The Negroes, intent on listening, did not hear his grumble or move with sufficient alacrity and he drew his revolver. Lydia noticed the cop, his trembling hand, and gently she touched his arm, persuading him to return the gun to its holster. The meeting went on.

It is fitting, perhaps, that this man of San Antonio, reared in the atmosphere of primitive prejudice against the Negro, became the white American who was among the foremost in advancing the need for a total struggle on behalf of that tenth of our people who suffer most. Perhaps he remembered Mrs. Body and her husband whose first name was Mister, back in Texas; perhaps he recalled the lynch mob running through the streets of San Antonio, saw again the severed black thumb the white man showed him when he was a lad of sixteen. What was the answer? How do you cope with this horror?

Wait until Socialism? That was a criminal abdication of social responsibility. Return to Africa, as Marcus Garvey preached?

But the Negroes were Americans, had contributed their mighty share to the growth and richness of the land. Three hundred years and more they had plowed and reaped and built, their sons had died in all America's wars, they merited full and unqualified citizenship, not its shadow; its substance.

So Bob thought, and studied, and argued, and in February and March of 1924 he wrote his memorable articles in the *Liberator,* "The Black Ten Millions," which pioneered in their time. An influential Negro newspaper, the *Amsterdam News,* reprinted them to cast new light on the program and viewpoint in the Communist movement.

In the great white city of New York, Bob wrote, lived another city, a Black City, of one quarter million Negroes. Five other great American cities had within each a Black City of more than 100,000 inhabitants. The Negro city was a ghetto. Its inhabitants may freely visit the white town and may work there the day through, "but comes the end of his labor, and he must return, be it to sleep, to eat or to amuse himself, to his own pale."

To those who saw the Negro as a passive, submissive follower of the white, he explained that the Negro had a culture of his own: his musicians, his poets, novelists, actors, students, his scientific men, his bourgeoisie even—and his own apostles of liberty. The black man was increasingly rebelling against "white supremacy."

With his customary thoroughness Bob had been studying the history of the Negro in America. He had found time to get books on the subject from the Chicago libraries, and in his piece he recounted twenty-five insurrections against slavery in the American colonies. That the desperate uprisings of slavery days failed was beside the point. "The Negro possesses the initiative and the courage to make his a free race," he thundered against the scoffers, using the terminology of the time, the word "race," which he abandoned as the issues came clearer and he saw the crucial question as the struggle of an oppressed people, a submerged minority.

The Emancipation Proclamation had not ended oppression. White landowners in the South rob the Negro sharecroppers and tenant farmers "in almost the same manner as seventy-five years ago." The peonage of today was a latter-day version of outright chattel slavery. The laws and customs of Jim Crow decreed the

EXODUS FROM DIXIE —*The Liberator*, 1924

segregation of Negroes, disfranchised them, barred their children from the schools of white children. In South Carolina, for instance, the Negro population virtually equals that of the white. "But ten million dollars is spent to educate white children, while one million is spent for a similar number of Negro children."

A new spirit is a 'borning. Sons of the Negro people drafted into the World War, some 368,000, got military training: about 200,000 had "the amazing experience of a trip to Europe and a flickering glimpse of what is called 'social' equality." The American Negro who went to Europe did not, on his return, fit into the scheme of the plantation and the overseer. "His neck no longer fitted into the lynchers' noose."

The soldiers, Bob said, began to transform lynching "into what is called a riot—that is, a two-sided fight." But when the Negro defends himself "the Law" steps in to complete the thwarted lynching. So it was in a long series of "race riots," in Charleston, S. C., Chicago, Elaine, Ark., Knoxville, Longview, Texas; Omaha, Washington, D. C., Duluth, Independence, Kansas, Ocoee, Florida, even in Springfield, Ill., Abe Lincoln's home.

Yet even mobilization into the army is not the sole cause of the new birth. Northern manufacturers dipped into the great stagnant pool of the South for black labor power after the submarines cut off European immigration. A vast influx of Negroes entered the big Northern cities: the black population of Detroit, alone, rose from some 5,700 in 1910 to 53,000 in 1923. But the hegira North brought a train of evils, like camp-followers, in its wake: persecutions, petty and large, lynching and segregation. "Race discrimination is on the upgrade," Bob warned, "not the downgrade, in these mad days of capitalist decay."

In his second article, in March, Bob posed the conditons which the Negro requires to escape his oppression. He expounded his party's principles, much of which he had been among the foremost in promulgating. These included:

Abolition of the restrictions "upon the Negro's right to residence: that is, abolition of 'black belt' segregation."

Abolition of the distinction "between colored and white children in the schools"; which distinction, with segregation, results not only in perpetuating race hatred, but also in the

starvation of Negro schools. (It was not until 1954, a full thirty years later, that the Supreme Court of the United States was obliged to rule similarly.)

Equal right "to vote in the South."

The organization "of millions of unorganized Negro wage-laborers in industry, in the same union with white workers."

The Negro's fate in America, Bob concluded, was intertwined with that of the white working class: both needed each other, neither could win without the other. He taught, furthermore, that the Negro's fate is "a political question." It can not be left solely to the trade union movement, though labor was central to the solution. The question must permeate the struggles on the electoral scene as well as within the trade union halls.

This was the burden of his writings into which he threw every ounce of his vigor. He had become a major spokesman of his party on the matter. His articles on the Negro question were studied by thousands, and an editor of the *Amsterdam News* wrote him: "It is needless to say that yours are among the most able and comprehensive articles ever written on this question. Already I have been reading some remarkably fine comments on them. It is bound to do a lot of good and set the victims a-thinking. Imagine an article like yours up against this Republican stuff. It seems to be too good to be true."

Outstanding Chicago Negroes came out of the working class to join that party which Bob represented to them in his person: men like James W. Ford, a veteran of World War I who later became the party's vice-presidential candidate in three national elections; like Harry Haywood who was to become an outstanding writer on this question, whose book *Negro Liberation* was printed in many languages.

The Communist Party and its leaders, locally and nationally, warmly welcomed Bob's pioneering work, endorsed his efforts; together they shaped a policy and a theory that was to play its big part in advancing the Negro's struggle for equality, that was to hasten the influx of Negroes into the labor movement of the Thirties when they brought fresh vigor into its stormy growth, moving like armies with bright banners.

What Makes Them Tick?

IT IS NOT easy for the Philistine to assess the life of a Communist. Certainly it was not easy in the America of the Twenties. As the wheels of industry began to move again after the postwar slump, and the House of Morgan, the House of Rockefeller, prospered mightily as they muscled in on the territory that once poured billions into the bourses of Britain, Germany, France, the operative phrase was "get-rich-quick." The bootleggers got the drift and the gangland wars were imperialist wars in miniature. Al Capone's machine-gunners built an empire while their boss wrapped the flag around him to say in *Liberty* magazine, aping his mentors, "we got to keep Bolshevism from our shores."

The Teapot Dome scandal and its lurid stories of mysterious meetings in Washington rendezvous' where little black bags passed hands to Cabinet members, was merely a warning not to get caught. What did that matter, after all, when the stock market was going up and up. Stenographers and plumbers were buying stocks, watching the ticker tape, the feature writers wrote by the acre.

The economists of Yale and Harvard predicted an age of endless prosperity. Somebody coined the phrase "Ford, not Marx," and it became a joyous refrain everywhere.

To many, as they read the newspapers which described the Communists variously as dire subversives who oughtta be locked up or sent back where they came from, or as ridiculous idealists, do-gooders to be ridiculed, the "Reds" were inscrutable creatures. You could occasionally hear philosophic dialogues over the bars in the speakeasies off Madison Avenue where eminent publicists rested from their labors. Yes, what about the odd people who were so full of wind and fury about higher wages, stronger unions, lower hours, better schools, matters to leave to

their betters. Yes, what was in it for them, these halcyon days of the Charleston and the crystal-set that gave the nation the deathless refrain of "Yes, We Have No Bananas."

Why did these Communists trudge in picketlines of the big textile strike at Passaic, New Jersey, or up in New Bedford, or out in the bituminous coalfields? What *did* they get out of it? Blacklist, sure, and broken heads, or prison terms. Yet they kept at it, kept stirring up our contented people, why?

The nation's intellectuals were beginning to handle the jargon of a man named Freud and they had an answer: the martyr or the Oedipus complex. Others quoted Henry Mencken, the sage of Baltimore, who preferred to describe the Reds as cranks, the "lunatic fringe" of a nation that was going to the dogs anyway, a nation of the "booboisie."

It was the day of the debunkers and tomes were written to prove that George Washington never cut down a cherry tree. Every man for himself and devil take the hindmost, that was the new Revelation, most intellectuals felt, as they took jobs with the boy-wonder out of Yale named Henry Luce who founded a new-fangled magazine called *Time,* or they went, pretending reluctance, to Hollywood to write scripts for Dustin Farnum or Mary Pickford. Gather ye rosebuds while ye may.

Only these crazy Communists seemed to grab on to something that was not money, a blind faith, genuflecting to the Holy Writ of dialectical materialism as blindly as the "hill-billies" of Tennessee worshipped their bearded, wrathful Jehovah in the Scopes monkey trial.

And if the average Communist was a strange duck, what about the men and women they chose to lead them? This occasioned more puzzlement. Take that man Foster. Could pull down twenty grand a year, easy, a vice-president of the AFL, but what does the man choose? Pick up any day's paper and like as not you would find news of the American miracle, the glowing partnership of Capital and Labor. Labor was going into the banking business itself, building marble halls replete with grilled windows, safes bigger than Bessemer furnaces, with cashiers in black mohair coats just like those in the Chase National Bank. But this doesn't suit Foster who is running around the country stirring up strikes with his Trade Union Educational League, beefing about higher pay, lower hours, better unions, jabbering about misleaders of labor. If he'd play the game, like Bill

Green, or Mattie Woll, there's a man for you, officer of the National Civic Federation where the boss lies down with the worker, lion with lamb, a parable come true; yes, if Foster would play ball, he'd not only net his twenty grand, but expenses too, and boy, these swindle sheets, those conventions they throw in Miami where the bourbon flows like trilling brooks and the night clubs roar into the dawn. The life, boy, the life! How *do* you figure a man like Foster?

Or take this other one, Minor. A genius! Any of them, Pulitzer, Hearst, Scripps, would give him a contract, he could write his own ticket if he was regular, drew what the editor wants him to draw. Instead he works for a lousy Red magazine named the *Liberator,* or is it the *Workers' Monthly* now, or the *Daily Worker,* he's all over the lot soap-boxing, mixed up with this stuff about a Labor Party, he's out on the South Side in Chicago with the ragged blacks, or he's blowing off steam about recognizing Russia, blowing a gasket about foreigners in jail, Mooney, Vanzetti, God knows what else. Wearisome fellows.

THE TIGHTWAD —*Daily Worker,* 1924

Set 'em up again, bartender.

They've got something there. Bob, as a Communist leader, had his irons in many fires. Politics, for most in America had come to mean the quest for patronage. One way or another. But Communist politics, political leadership, ignored the boodle. Instead they spent arduous hours, day and night, in action and in study. They fought on many fronts, faced a powerful foe outside the party, combatted the influences of that enemy, the reflections of capitalist thought within the party, ideas, for example, that ignored the lot of the Negro millions, or the opportunism which saw an endless vista of Wall Street prosperity, or the leftism which expects man to behave the way the sectarian wants him to behave rather than the way life has fashioned him to act and to think.

Life within the party was ardent struggle, as life outside was. Ideas, a program, must be ironed out, and strong men have strong convictions. Some put greater emphasis on one course, others on another. Debate had arisen about the need for labor's independent political action, and as they felt in that day, for a Labor Party. The leading world theoretician of Marxism in this time, Lenin, had written: "Marx and Engels taught the Socialists to break at all costs with narrow sectarianism and *affiliate* with the labor movement, so as to *rouse politically* the proletariat, since the proletariat displayed *almost* no political independence either in England or America in the last third of the 19th century."

Predecessors to the Communists in the United States, like Daniel De Leon rejected these teachings, believed his party was enough. Labor and farmer parties were essentially reactionary in his view. And in the view of the Socialist Party. The Workers Party had to slough off the traditional hostility of Socialists to a labor party.

In 1922 its majority saw the crucial importance of labor as an independent political power, with a party that would break the political domination of the capitalist parties. It should hold within its ranks Socialists and non-Socialists alike. Bob helped to draw up the resolution the Central Executive Committee adopted in May 1922 on a labor party.

So there was endless campaigning to do, in this time, for a Labor Party, hundreds of trade union leaders to see; there were caucuses to attend within his own party: there was, moreover, for

Bob, his ardent advocacy of Negro rights, the entire Negro question; articles to write on these and many other matters, speaking, writing, organizing, and as the volume of work poured in on him, as a political leader, he found less and less time to draw. The *Liberator* had merged with the *Workers Monthly;* in addition, Bob went abroad several times as a delegate to conferences of the Communist International. His energies, his creative talents in many fields, pulled him away from his art.

Cartooning required so much time, thought, energy, that he said his good trusty right hand would rust unless he surrendered his other duties. But he could not surrender them. Bob pondered the question, many long months, several years in fact, but once he came to a decision in 1926, he laid aside his crayon and pencil, not gladly, and yet without brooding frustration. He made no fanfare of the occasion. More important than his individual inclination, he felt, was the common job that had to be done. He decided that he could not be a political leader and a cartoonist simultaneously.

And so the labor movement lost the most gifted artist it had ever known. Tragedy? Some believed so, many believe so today. But if the American labor movement lost a master cartoonist, it never lost the qualities that made him the artist he was: his passion, imagination, clarity, eloquence, devotion, courage, which he transferred to his writing. In another time, today, the likelihood is that he would not have felt the need to choose. Communists, Communist spokesmen, like Pablo Neruda of Chile, Louis Aragon of France, Fadeyev of the Soviet Union, the poet Juan Marinello, who was vice-president of the Cuban Senate, are artists and political leaders, simultaneously. The poet Neruda was elected a senator by the votes of his beloved coal miners; Aragon is a member of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, Fadeyev, of the Russian Communist Party, a Soviet Deputy—a congressman, in our terms.

Perhaps the position of culture in a nation's life is more firmly accepted by world labor today. Bread and roses, is the way an old American union song put it. Bob thought others like Fred Ellis could maintain the art of the cartoon at the height it merited. *He* had to speak, to write, to edit. In 1928 he was chosen editor of the *Daily Worker.*

He returned to New York with Lydia, as full of zest and power as ever.

Years of the Skeleton

A DAILY NEWSPAPER, for workingmen. Nowhere in the land was there another. Bob recalled the day it was born, four years before, shortly after the New Year, in Chicago, remembered the jubilation among his comrades when it came off the press, remembered savoring the paper, holding it in his hands, spreading it out, leafing the pages. Now it had moved to New York.

A workers' paper, *there* was something holy. Here, on these pages a dream lay spread out. Dream of freedom, dream of brotherhood. As he walked through the dingy, narrow newsroom, in downtown New York, he reflected on the pennies and nickels and dimes workingmen and workingwomen laid aside for *their Worker,* coins that came from hours and days and weeks of work. They created this paper with their heart's blood. This little newsroom, Bob thought, half dark, the chairs battered and ancient, furnished with second-hand desks, the varnish cracking, the drawers buckling, the dusty typewriters rented, all this spelled freedom. No, none but Communists could see that, now. Later, many would.

A workingman's paper. So the former slave Frederick Douglass must have felt when he gazed at his *North Star.* Yes, the paper must bring the shine of truth to the darkness everywhere, must be a canny guide to workingmen, their "collective organizer," as Lenin had said, had said to him. Bob spoke of the paper to the half dozen men on the staff as though it were the shining sword Excalibur, and though his enthusiasm glowed like flame, he was no zealot whom his friends of the *World* and *Post-Dispatch* could write off as "an impractical visionary." He had not allowed the four corners of his drawing-board to be the boundary of his interest. His watchful eye had observed the organization, had studied the mechanism, the technique of news gathering, news writing, and he brought his experience to the workers' paper. The opposition papers were, as the crusty publisher Frank Munsey had said, "eight percent investments,"

designed to make profit and simultaneously to hawk the ideas of the owning class, lie-factories, nothing more. But, Bob said, they had developed techniques, a form, to present their wares. *Their* papers had meticulous organization, editor, city editor, desk men, re-write men, reporters, editorial writers, staff writers, circulation departments: a division of labor. They adhered to rules of writing, typography, lay-out: not all that Greeley, Bennett, Pulitzer, Scripps had done was bad. They knew a paper must be interesting to get readers; respected the arduous disciplines of the deadline. Journalism was a craft, an art you had to learn, to master.

He plunged into the job, staying long hours at night, shirtsleeves rolled high, collar loosened, staying until the first copy ran off the presses and he sat examining the paper, the print still damp, the play of its stories, its arrangement, order, emphases. He wrote most of the editorials, writing, re-writing, reading again and re-writing again. Bob tried to write simply, in the vernacular, searching for the exact word, the phrase that would stick with the reader. If his editorials grew too long on occasion it was because his mind teemed with ideas on all issues. And, damn it, you need time to write briefly. Time, time. He could not spend all the time at the paper it required. He dashed off to meetings of the national committee, he had reports to prepare, party commissions to attend: the Negro committee, other committees. Each task required absorption, thought, energy, time. There were public meetings to address, and frequently he would leave the paper, between deadlines, to talk to crowds on many issues: went down to Wall Street, for example, to address a "Hands Off Nicaragua" meeting, climbed to the top of a sedan, spoke against the shame of imperialism until the angry hands of policemen tore him from his impromptu rostrum. Booked at the police station for disorderly conduct, bail arranged, he took the subway up to the paper and dove into work with the calm of a man who has just had a hearty breakfast after a good night's sleep.

Often he returned home, to Croton-on-the-Hudson at two, three, four in the morning, walking the two miles to his house up the hill, behind the elms, striding along the dark road in his loose, easy, walk, breathing deeply, joyously. He was inexhaustible.

At midnight, October 24, 1929, he sat in his editorial cubicle lit by the single electric bulb, scanning the page proofs of his

editorial. His desk was piled high with the yellow, rolled sheets of the United Press that had, all day long, described the furore down on Wall Street.

The storm had broken. He, his fellow-Marxists, had predicted it, knew from their science it was coming, had tried to warn the nation's workers it was coming. Only twenty-odd days before October 24, a resolution adopted by the plenary meeting of the national committee described "the clear features of an oncoming crisis that would shake the very foundations of the power of American imperialism." Prior to that Marxist parties in all lands had, unremittingly, warned their readers of the danger. Stalin had frequently spoken of the depression that was impending "within the general crisis of capitalism." The predictions were ridiculed by the economists of the established power: no, the United States was destined to zoom along, without crisis, providing each American a chicken for every pot, a car for every garage, as the engineer now president, The Great Engineer, Herbert Hoover, had proclaimed.

And now, the storm. The queues of the unemployed multiplied by the day, the hour. Factories went on half-time, quarter-time, closed altogether. The bleak silence of the machines froze the blood of workingmen, who read the closing notices tacked on the gates and thought of their children. Bob looked long at the gray breadlines on the streets of New York, within the shadow of the regal skyscrapers, and saw the trembling hands that took the dole of soup; and then, soon, the dismal Hoovervilles sprang up on vacant lots or on city dumps, the flower of men turned to weed. Men like ghosts walked among the lean-tos they made of discarded planks, gasoline cans. They drew over them rag-tag overcoats, sackcloth of the time. He looked at them, gaunt, unshaven, men without women, their families dispersed by hunger, wives, mothers, going off to their folks as the husbands, fathers, went in opposite directions to find work, ending up in the purgatory of the flotsam villages named after a Great Engineer.

Bob and his comrades worked day and night. The Trade Union Unity League led by Foster set up Unemployment Councils, organizations of the jobless, that grappled with the hunger in their cities. They began to march on the municipal buildings, on the state capitals, and finally, on the national capital, demanding relief for the starving. Everywhere Communists were

in the van of the marching men, for the high officers of the trade unions, like William Green and Matthew Woll, accepted Hoover's windy assurances that prosperity was around the corner, and then, when the Unemployment Councils and the Communists proposed immediate relief and unemployment insurance, the portly nabobs of labor parroted the portly foes of labor, that the Communist proposal was a demand for a "dole," which, they told hungry Americans, was "un-American."

Americans who had transformed a wilderness into a continent of populous cities and fertile farmlands believed *starvation* was un-American. And they followed the Unemployed Councils and the Communists on the marches.

It was in one of these demonstrations that I first saw Bob. He marched down Lower Broadway in his bold stride at the van of a procession of hungry men and women who came to insist that the city government hear their plight. In January of 1930, a newcomer to New York, I saw his big figure pulled down by a dozen police, who leaped at him like wolves at a great stag, threw him to the earth, kicked him, his face, his head, as he lay unconscious. The mounted police rode herd on us when we tried to reach him. I saw the police drag Bob's body through the doors of the basement in City Hall. It was a tribute to his hardy prairie youth that he survived the punishment, for within days, he was back at his desk on the paper, at work, his head in bandages.

Five months after the stock market crashed, the Unemployed Councils set a day of nationwide demonstrations against the encircling starvation. Millions of leaflets summoned Americans to a stand. The headlines of the *Daily Worker* were bigger and blacker as the day for the march approached, March 6, 1930.

The streets of New York grew ominous. Mayor Jimmy Walker, a clothes-horse of a man whose derbied head and form-fitting double-breasted suit was seen in all the nightclubs, forgot his sharp wit to say bluntly that the women and children of Communists would be "wise" to stay away from Union Square where the demonstration was to form.

March 6 was a brilliant New York day, the air pregnant with spring, the small buds beginning to sprout on the slim trees of Union Square. More than spring was in the air. The prickly sense of danger permeated the downtown streets. From Sixth Avenue toward Union Square, along Fifteenth Street and all

other thoroughfares leading to the Square, you encountered troops of mounted police drawn up in grim details; battalions of foot police had drilled and drilled again, tramped the pavements. The headlines on the newsstands were like bulletins of an approaching battle.

You wondered, turning into the Square, whether the people would dare to come. And as you turned the corner, into the Square, your heart leaped. Throngs of men, women, old, young, the Negro, the white, were marching down the streets and avenues, crowding forward from the desolate boroughs, massing in the great enclosure to the north. Above them, on the surrounding buildings, the silhouettes of police stood against the March sky, pricking it with sawed-off shotguns.

The meeting opened in a restrained calm, the crowd orderly, expectant, and yet unafraid. You saw a spokesman for the unemployed rise on the platform and propose that a committee be chosen to officer the meeting. By acclamation the crowd chose Foster chairman, Robert Minor, editor of the *Daily Worker,* Israel Amter, Communist leader of New York, and two unemployed workers, one of whom was Harry Raymond, later to become a reporter for the *Daily Worker.* The delegation then went to the hastily constructed police pagoda to see Police Commissioner Grover Whalen and announce the intention of the demonstrators to march to City Hall where they would present their grievances for redress. Silence fell over the crowd as the committeemen entered the door of the pagoda.

Whalen, as Bob looked to him, seemed ludicrous, sitting at a little table, his right hand in his side coat pocket. The outlines of a flat automatic could be seen through the cloth of the coat, so boy-scout-like that Bob suddenly had an urge to laugh. Then he became aware that Whalen was in a state of nervous fright which was not good for the control of his trigger-finger. That was not funny.

The heavy gold braid of the uniforms and caps of four or five commissioners and half a dozen captains ranged on both sides of Whalen made the little pagoda circus-gay. Bob looked out at the huge gray sea of 100,000 men and women, saw their eyes staring toward the pagoda.

Whalen's mouth opened several times, soundlessly, then he found his breath to ask: "Who are you and what do you want?" Two policemen closed in on each of the committee

members, their shoulders touched. Foster said in a clear voice you could hear outside that they were the members of a committee elected by the assembled workers to present the mayor their demands for unemployment relief. It was the desire of these workers, and their spokesmen "to proceed down Broadway by the most direct route to City Hall" in order to present their demands to the mayor who had been officially notified they were coming. What Bob saw was a magnificent mural Michelangelo could have brought to life: the strained, heavy faces of the police, in their gold braid and gold buttons, the scared face of the Police Commissioner, tanned by his recent visit to the sands of Florida, the flower he always affected, in his buttonhole, the carefully combed moustache, and facing them the figures of workingmen, bold, plain, honest, his comrade Bill's face, long and lean, the forehead tall, the eyes straight and clear, Amter with the mien of an Indian, his profile reminding Bob of an Navajo chief he had seen as a child, the strong mouth and brilliant eyes, Amter, one of the most selfless of men, lion-hearted, who would curl up and sleep on his desk when there was no money for lodging, Amter, a son, like Bob, of the Southwest, of Colorado.

Bob heard Whalen refuse to withdraw the army of police and Foster's reply: "These workers built these streets, Mr. Whalen, but they are denied the right to walk them." Bob interjected angrily that the Queen of Rumania on her recent visit was given the keys to the city and the right to the city. "Are the streets reserved for royalty?"

The police commissioner's eyes were like lumps of coal, dead, almost unseeing as the delegation filed out and returned to the platform. Impassive, severe, Foster told the crowd that Whalen had refused them their right to march peacefully to City Hall. Did they accept that refusal? A roar of "No!" went up, startling the flocks of pigeons that rose, went wheeling by the hundreds into the sky. "Then let us go," Foster said, his arm aloft. Bob watched the crowd turn to move toward Broadway, "the thinking crowd," as he had written during the Spartakus days in Berlin.

The assembly had moved a dozen paces when the thud of hoofs exploded as the mounted police charged. He heard the plainclothesmen scream maniac-like as they ran amok, swinging their nightsticks against all heads they could reach. Men in

worn clothes, old, young, grandfathers, grandsons, grandmothers too, were trampled by the hooves of horses. Police cars blew their sirens and moved into the crowds, like tanks, against flesh. In a trice the orderly demonstration was a chaos of crashing clubs and thudding bodies. Across the street from the Square, on Broadway, where the stores had great plate-glass windows, Bob saw horsemen charge against bystanders, drive them tumbling into the crash of glass, into the mannikins, the toys and the dolls of the window displays. And from a corner of his eye Bob saw Whalen, surrounded by the gold-braid, posy in his lapel, stand frozen with a frozen smile.

The crowd that would not take "No" for an answer shouted "On to City Hall." You worked your way down Broadway, shoulders hunched against the flailing nightsticks, until you came to the south entrance of the IRT subway where hundreds boarded the trains to City Hall. You scarcely arrived on the Mall at the Municipal Building when you saw the police close in on Foster, Bob, Amter, the others, the buttons of the blue sleeves flashing as the cops collared the men, whisking them off to prison.

So it was across the land. A million and a quarter unemployed Americans had exercised their right to assembly and petition. Everywhere the police did violence to them, in Detroit, in Los Angeles, Chicago, Pittsburgh, Boston, San Francisco.

Two days later the front page of the New York *Times,* March 8, carried three headlines. The first, a statement by the Great Engineer who said in the luxury of his White House: *Depression Is Passing; 36 States Are Normal.* The Second: *Leaders of Red Riot Held Without Bail: Fight for Release.* The third, and perhaps the most telling: *Labor Sets March 19 for Jobless Parley: 300 Union Bodies Here Called to Consider Situation Now Termed 'Acute'.* The Unemployed Councils, Bob saw with silent satisfaction, in his cell, had placed unemployment insurance, immediate relief, on the national agenda, life grappling with the skeleton.

The brutality sobered the city. The metropolis had not recovered from the shock when Commissioner Whalen told the League for Political Education, March 7, the day after the demonstration, that he had been very "considerate" at Union Square but henceforth he would deal "differently" with Communist agitators. He would publish a list of "300 Reds," their places of

GHOST OF THE DEAD "HUN": "Well, Buddy, they fixed us right, didn't they? You're out of a job, and I don't need one."
—*The Liberator,* 1922

employment, and he would advise their employers to fire them.

Whalen, the mayor, the city administration did not foresee the consequences of this municipal innovation. An outcry rose from the tenement streets, reached into the middle classes and respected citizens like the eighteen professors at Columbia Law School publicly protested "the flagrant violation of civil liberties" wherein police took the initiative to report "Communists or persons of any other political, social or religious complexion to their employers with a view to their discharge." The American Civil Liberties Union condemned "the brutality in breaking up that parade as lawlessness and unnecessary." Dr. J. McKeen Cattell, a prominent psychologist who had been dropped from Columbia because he opposed World War I, now editor of the magazine *Science,* wrote Whalen: "When you arrange with the heads of industrial corporations to dismiss employes because they are Communists who exercise rights secured to them by the Constitution of the Unted States you are committing a felony, and the United States District Attorney should take action." Innumerable unionists defied their leaders as they spoke their abhorrence of the police violence and expressed their sympathies for the demonstrators, and yes, for those who led them, Communist or not. The tumult obliged Morris Hillquit to deplore the brutalities. Whalen resigned two months later, the New York *Times* headlining the story on its front page, saying that "Red criticism" caused his abdication.

If October 24, 1929, is accepted as a milestone to a new era in American life, the day of the Crash, the beginning of the Depression March 6, 1930 may well be regarded as the beginning of the Resistance, the day labor began its counter-attack.

The authorities lost no time. By April 12, the New York *Times* front page carried the headline: RED LEADERS GUILTY IN UNION SQUARE RIOTING; FACE THREE-YEAR TERM. The trial lasted less than a day and the judges ruled it "immaterial" that the police had ridden down the demonstrators and clubbed them. The prison van took Bob and his comrades to the Tombs twice during the day of the trial. The *Times* reported, "Once when the defendants emerged from the Criminal Court Building at noon and once when they were being marched across 'The Bridge of Sighs' to the Tombs, the police were called upon to break up attempts of admirers of Foster and Minor to demonstrate what they termed 'solidarity.' "

Man Behind Bars

SIX MONTHS to three years, the judge said.

The evening before Bob left his home on the hill to go to prison, he sat up late, talking to Lydia. Everything was in order, all the minutiae of the daily life were checked. He rose, walked about the room, looked out the window at the Hudson Valley, the crescent of a moon overhead, then he turned to the shelves of books scanning the titles as though he had never seen them before, then at Lydia's paintings on the walls, the knick-knacks on the window sill, her tiny porcelain elephants, her collection of sea shells one of which he picked up and fingered absently. "Prison, too, is part of it," he said, turned toward her, "It is not the grave."

The next morning the barred door clanged shut. The guards had recited the rules, tonelessly, a ritual, took Bob's penknife and his fountain pen, anything that could be considered weapons or instruments with which a prisoner could commit suicide.

In his cell Bob stared at his fellow-prisoner, Harry Raymond, the seaman, a lively young man of middle height, native of Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Foster and Amter were in other cells. "Well, Bob," the seaman smiled, with a shrug of his shoulders, "We got some time on our hands. How about a game of cards." Bob shook his head. He hated cards, perhaps because he felt they wasted time, time, so precious and fruitful and scarce, at least up to now. "No, Harry," he replied. "I think I've got a better idea. You tell me the story of your life, Harry, and when you finish I'll tell you mine."

"In detail?" the seaman asked dubiously. "In detail," Bob laughed. Harry began his story as they sat on their bunks, the seaman insisting on the upper to save his older comrade the need to clamber up. Three days, between prison chores, the seaman spoke and Bob listened, intently, asking a question now and

then, storing the saga of a man's life in the treasury of his mind, thinking of his own young days on the highroads. How cimilar are the lives of workingmen, he thought, how much of hard work, hunger, hardship, and yet, often, heady adventure, in each. When Harry finished Bob began, but he had only begun when the guards came to take Harry to another prison.

Alone now, Bob asked the warden if he might read books. "Depends," the warden replied, thinking, Bob guessed, that he wanted no damn books around that might reach the minds of others who might chance on them. The warden had heard about these Communists, odd characters, bookworms when they weren't overthrowing the government. But he allowed Bob books—on history and political economy—if they came from the publishers direct. Bob wrote Lydia the titles of the books he wanted.

Wrote Lydia? That became his most treasured occupation and his letters are a measure of the man, probing, passionate, tender, and his wife saved each letter which she read and read again, almost hearing his warm resonant voice in the lines. Welfare Island was a prison island in the East River, a drab place of sorrow, not far from the river hospitals where the city confined its insane, its indigent, its contagiously sick, an archipelago of misery. It was "the worst place I have ever seen in Europe or America," Bob wrote Lydia. "But even so, we shall get along."

They got along. Bob promptly began to teach some prisoners English, after his prison chores, and evenings he spent reading and composing long, thoughtful letters to Lydia. He described his prison cell, its eight feet length, seven feet height, four and a half feet width in which two men live. The air was fetid, hard to breathe. On hot nights he crouched low at the door "to stick my nose between bars (one and one-half inch space) to breathe the fresher air so as to be able to sleep."

He had trouble sleeping. Years of his unremitting work had sapped him and he had gone into prison in poor health. Lydia had fairly driven him to a doctor who said Bob suffered from a chronic appendicitis and should go under the knife soon. He had put him on a careful diet. Now behind bars, Bob must take what they gave: breakfast, a daub of thin porridge, bread and something strange they called coffee; at noon absolutely inedible slivers of meat, but the beans, cabbage and watery

mashed turnips of the three meals sustained him. He gave Lydia these details, apologetically, to arm her, he wrote, "with facts to do whatever can be done."

The place "is an instrument of deliberate bestialization in every possible way." It was designed to break you down unless you were spared the harsh routine, like Morris Connolly was, Connolly, the sewer king, in for graft, who had a well-furnished room to himself.

Yet, Bob wrote, life is interesting "no matter where one may be, even if he were in a cell with no other sample of life present but himself." And life in a grim dormitory with half a hundred men of many types cannot altogether be useless if enough remains within you "to see and to hear." When his failing health obliged the authorities to enter him in the prison hospital for examination and some limited treatment, he lay on his cot reading O. Henry whenever the spurts of pain in his side subsided, O. Henry who too knew the inside of prison: "I knew that his story-telling ability must have ripened in just such a hothouse of sharp and reckless drama as one finds precisely in a prison," Bob wrote his wife.

The other prisoners regarded him curiously, studying him as he was studying them. Bobby Weiner, a notorious gangster who "beat a murder rap" as the prisoners whispered, hard-faced, sharp of eye, supremely cynical, was fascinated by Bob whom he always addressed as "Mr. Minor." The gangster wondered what made the big bald man tick, this prisoner who carried himself with such imposing dignity and who accorded others his grave, careful, courteous attention. Wasn't he a Communist, that despised breed of men, the arch-outlaws of the time? Yet he was clearly a man of stature, intellect, with the bearing of a statesman. What was in it for him? Talking to Bob the gangster realized this was no ordinary man, nut, crank, whatever they wanted to call him.

And Weiner sought Bob out to talk to him whenever he could. Bob was wary. Would Weiner, the crook incarnate, twist some casual word into something sinister to report to the Warden and gain further favor? The little gangster, a generalissimo of the narcotic trade, friend to overybody in the high places, was saved from the chair by Tammany, as everybody knew. He approached Bob daily, with an expansive smile, clad in his baby-blue silk polo shirt, a glistening gold wristwatch on his

arm, his tailor-made pants freshly pressed, his expensive shoes richly polished, *the* power of the prison. He had captured the throne by combining the Jewish and the Irish gunmen against an Italian gangster who had ruled hitherto. Weiner's men had assaulted the Italian with kitchen knives, "slicing" him, severing the tendons of the arms and the legs, leaving the victim a crumpled mass of helpless flesh.

"I hope you are in good health today, Mr. Minor" Weiner said ingratiatingly. Prison etiquette had it that no man asked another questions of his life, and beyond the matter of health Bobby did not go. At first. He tossed something up that was in the daily news, something safe, a sensational scandal, a railway or plane accident, a sex crime or some natural cataclysm.

Later that day Weiner passed through the reception room as Bob spoke to Lydia, this visiting day. When Bob slowly returned to his hospital ward, Weiner caught up with him. "Mr. Minor," he said, walking at Bob's side, "I have lost my girl. She and I agreed it's all over today. What do you think of that?"

"If you yourself think its best and if she does," Bob replied slowly, "why not?"

The opulent little gangster was thoughtful. "Mr. Minor," he said, "I guess you think there are some women who will wait for their man till he gets out of jail, don't you?" And Bob replied, "Yes, Bobby, I think most of them will."

"No, mine wouldn't," he said quietly, a look on his face Bob had not seen before. "You know, Mr. Minor, I wish I had a girl who would wait for me till I got out of jail. But I guess I never ran with the right kind." There was something pathetic about the man, something that seemed genuine, and then, reverting to type, Weiner laughed scornfully, "I guess the only woman a man can trust is his mother, like the song says. I never knew anybody else I could trust."

It was the first time he had ventured to talk of his personal life and Bob speculated that even in this hardened criminal, this killer, some spark of humanity flickered. Yet it would, doubtless, be extinguished if anyone threatened his material interest.

The gangster looked shrewdly at Bob. "You are losing weight, Mr. Minor," he said. Bob had lost twenty-four pounds his first three months of prison, the pain in his side was sharper, sometimes excruciating. Though Bob had spoken to nobody

of his health, he knew few secrets exist within prison walls. "Yes, I have lost a little weight, Bobby."

That night at supper a surge of nausea struck Bob, he could not take a bite of food before him. He was astonished when a trusty slipped by later to lay a tray of food before him: a slab of tasty meat (not the eternal bologna or sausage), hot baked potatoes, vegetables. The trusty slipped away but not before Bob recognized that he was, as he suspected, one of Weiner's men.

The little gangster passed Bob's cot the next day and said solicitously he had heard that Bob was to remain in bed for three days. "Take it easy, Mr. Minor," he said. The good food continued to come.

A week later Bob was up again, walking slowly in the courtyard. On the cement walk, he heard a tumult of cursing and saw a gang of twenty prisoners run at two Negroes. One white searched about the ground, found some stones and hurled them at the colored men. Bob lunged forward, without second thought and threw his arms around the prisoner. "He's a man like the rest of us," Bob cried. "You're playing into the hands of the screws with that stuff. It'll go hard on you and everybody else." The prisoner dropped the stones reluctantly. But the riot flared across the great yard until the guards came running with their shotguns.

The next day's newspapers carried stories quoting Warden Joseph A. McCann that Minor "was tireless in his attempts to make trouble," that he was acting so belligerently that "fellow prisoners had made threats of violence against him." Minor was "in rebellion against the rules"; he was fomenting disorder, smuggling out letters, it was a long indictment.

The atmosphere tensed within prison. Word flew from cell block to cell block that the Communist had sided with the Negroes during the riot. The most notorious prisoners stared at Bob balefully.

That evening Weiner sidled up to him, his customary smile on his face and, in a respectful tone, he asked about Bob's health. Bob replied, wondering what was coming next, and the gangster looked intently at him and then away. "Mr. Minor," he said distinctly, "if I was you I wouldn't go past Cell Block 9 tonight." And he ambled away.

A word to the wise? Bob remained on his cot, a book in his

hands, but he listened as hard as he could, his eyes wary. The next day a Weiner man stopped a moment to say, from the side of his mouth, that the ringleaders of the attack on the Negroes had decided to "slice" Bob.

And at this time, Lydia received a letter from Bob in response to one she had written him when a melancholy mood had overtaken her, and though she had tried to conceal her own troubles Bob divined the turn of her spirit. She was worried about his health, she had made scarcely any headway to get outside physicians to examine him. The campaign of the International Labor Defense seemed painfully laggard. The lot of the prisoner's wife, was, he thought, worse than that of the imprisoned. Imagined terrors are so often worse than the real, and he wrote her as reassuringly as he could.

"Yes," Bob said, "one day there will be a life without worrying. Not now. We cannot make life into a static thing, sweet Lydia; it is not static for anyone, not even for those who try to 'sit down' upon time in imagining or pretending it to be so, and thus destroy their power (and other people's power) to taste the flavor of the beautiful process that is life." We, he said, "will never indulge in the opium of such an illusion. life can never be without events for us, without the unexpected and the need and thirst to transform the unknown into the known. But in the process of life so fully engaging, we can be as happy as—well, as happy as we already know."

Right now much was going on in the world. *Look* at it. "Big movements of forces that have slept undisturbed for ages." Look *outward,* he was saying, free yourself from the purely personal preoccupations. "The mere watching of the world's events, through the bars of prison, reminds me now and then of breathtaking scenes of the Aurora Borealis as I saw them up North beyond the Arctic Circle. Big, flashing, awe-inspiring, incredible blazes of color flashing over the billions of light years of sky. These events of today's history are not mysterious, the joy of studying and understanding their stupendous movement —and of thus being a part of them, of life on a majestic scale, is priceless. Would we live in another day and age?"

He is afraid suddenly he is "preaching" to her, he didn't mean to do that. But we must be able "to see the astonishing 'Big Parade' that is thundering on beside us and around us and *in* us, and we must know that these thunders are the same that

we had dreamed of and that we had staked our lives in youth to find, hear and understand and help to create." Yes, with all the little aches and slips and ugliness "sometimes heartbreaking uglinesses," the most astonishing is this, he assured her, "how completely, how richly, how rapidly, the realization comes."

He reminds her that there were those who thought "it was only for future generations," but he never thought so. "As Heine said: see big things big, little things little. We have to remember that it is all made by us and by poor, evolved anthropi like us, that we are the scene-shifters as well as actors."

A few days later Weiner came to Bob. "Mr. Minor," he said, his face a mask now, the eyes shaded though he retained the smile of geniality, "You don't get your newspaper here, that, what's its name, the *Daily Worker*?" No, Bob did not. "Well," the little gangster said, "I understand they are announcing some articles about life in prison here. The conditions. Now the warden is not a bad fellow, and these articles, well, they won't help him. You know, these jobs have something to do with politics. Everything has, I guess, and as you know, of course. What will happen? They might put the warden out and get another fellow who'd be a lot worse." The little gangster's face was suddenly shrewd. "Thank you, Bobby," Bob replied evenly. "But I have nothing to do with the paper now, not since I am a prisoner. They make their decisions in their editorial office."

The gangster continued warily. "I understand, Mr. Minor, I understand, of course they do," his voice silken now, softer even than usual. "But you *were* the editor, I understand, and a little word from you, you know, a little word, and things can go a lot easier for all of us, *all* of us," he said carefully. "I understand," Bob replied, thinking now the warden was really worried, and Weiner too, for a change in wardens could terminate Weiner's tenure of power. The stakes were clear. "I know you had nothing to do with what went on in the prison yard the other day," Weiner said. "I know that. But some people don't. They mightn't listen to me if a new warden came in, Mr. Minor, and" without raising his voice, "that would be unfortunate."

"Yes, I am sure it would," Bob agreed. "I am sure it would be unfortunate, Bobby. But I don't see how I could be of any help." Weiner's eyes flickered over Bob's face and then he extended his hand, smiling, "Well, Mr. Minor, I tried to do the best I

could. If you should think the matter over, and have something to say to me, well, I'll be in my Cell Block all day, you know. I can't go to no fights in the Garden."

The next morning they moved Bob abruptly to another island prison, Riker's, where, despite his poor health, they set him on a hard routine of labor, withdrew his hospital privileges. The pain in his side became more excruciating, but the new warden turned away when Bob spoke of his illness. His condition became worse rapidly. Lydia, his comrades, grew alarmed. Bob's letters to Bill Foster and Amter in their prisons ceased coming after the riot in the yard. They decided to go on a hunger strike unless the prison authorities apprised them of Bob's status. The next day Bob collapsed at his work. The prison authorities had no recourse but to carry him to the hospital, for the chronic appendicitus had become acute. His life was in jeopardy.

Outside, Lydia was everywhere, button-holing notables, liberals, politicians, to speak out for Bob's right to the care of outside doctors. Under the circumstances an operation in prison could well be fatal, murder perhaps. The protesting clamor of the ILD rose; its members, by the thousands, wrote the authorities to grant Bob freedom from prison for an operation in a reputable hospital.

One morning, six months and eight days after he was taken to the Tombs for speaking on behalf of the jobless, he was carried from prison on a stretcher and rushed to a New York hospital for immediate operation. Delay would be fatal.

The thin edge of a surgeon's knife was the margin between life and death. The surgeons operated just in time, and at that, only the rugged frame of Routez' son saved him. The appendix had turned gangrenous, but his will to live triumphed. His hospital room was a garden of flowers sent him by organizations and old personal friends, and comrades, when Lydia came to take him home to Croton. She was silent as the white-clad hospital attendants helped Bob down the steps, her heart beat hard as she looked at his face, the gaunt cheekbones over the hollows below, the sharp, brown eyes deep sunk, the springy step gone, the invalid's air about him like an ill-fitting garment. Yes, it was something of a miracle that he recovered, and yet, somehow, she knew that he would not die. It was inconceivable that breath should go out of this untamed specimen of Man

who, only yesterday, wrote her of life that sparkled and showered the heavens like the Aurora Borealis that he saw.

Recovery did not come quickly. He lay in his bed, at home, the sun streaming in from the window that opened on the hills and trees of the valley. The days slipped into weeks and he caught Lydia's quick glance that flickered away as though she feared that he would read her thoughts. The agonizingly slow pace of his recovery tormented her, and sometimes a chill took her as she lay in bed. Would he, after all, slip away, stop breathing, sometime during the night? She had somehow expected his magnificent elan to return fast, he was so sure-footed on the crags of life.

And then, one day, he sat up, smiled again brightly, the glint returned to his eyes that caught light more than any other eyes she had ever seen. Lord, it was a long time.

Bob had thought, shortly after he came out of the ether during the operation, that now he would catch up on all the reading, the study, he wanted to do and had not fully achieved during all the busy years. But for weeks a paragraph or two was all that he could manage, then the book settled on his chest as his head sank back on the pillow. Now elan was returning Lydia saw, and she sang as she prepared his food in the kitchen below, listening intently for any noises upstairs. With satisfaction she heard the shuffle of his slippered feet as he took a few steps toward the bookcases for his books, a reassuring sound.

About this time Lincoln Steffens, who had moved to Croton, up the hill a few doors from Bob, came to visit, bringing a bouquet of red roses and a bottle of brandy. The flowers for Bob, he smiled, this gnome of a man, the small beard bobbing from his chin, his lustrous eyes laughing, and the brandy, in case Bob was not yet ready for it, for himself and Lydia. The two men had become friends, in an odd, oblique way, the paths of their lives criss-crossing through the years. Most of the time they were antagonists and yet their friendship endured. Steff knew Bob from the day his name was on marquee lights, so to speak, of modern cartoonists, he had kept his irreverent regard for a man who had, as he well knew, made an impact on this century. He had intervened for Bob's life during Coblenz but he never talked of that. Nor did Bob remind him of the Mooney days when Steff held with Fremont Older that Tom was guilty. No need to rake up the past when it was painful. Steff, Bob felt, was a

fighting man, a gamecock who had tackled them all, unafraid, taunting, in his curious way, the captains of society. He had always the air of a man saying, "Come now, no tricks, brother, I'm on to you." And, oddly enough, most of them, from J. P. Morgan down or up, had known it. Steff was, of course, wrong-headed as hell a good part of the time, Bob felt, wrong in his proposals for correction, though God knows, right in his estimate of most men he met. He could see through the sham, the pomp, the guile of those with whom he had dealings, but too often, most of the time, he did not know what to do with this knowledge. Bob often wondered how so prescient a man could believe that society's ills were traceable to bad men, as though he were a disciple of Carlisle, or a devotee of the Persian gods of Light and Darkness who tilted forever with each other. Yet, Bob knew, Steff was changing, had the capacity to learn even though he was nearing, or had passed, his three-score and ten. Rigor mortis had not struck this battler.

And it was gay, having Steff here, next door, Lydia felt, and she knew the old muckraker was happy to have his neighbor's company. They went at their philosophies, the ancient arguments, as of old, and yet with a difference. Steff had written, grudgingly perhaps, but bravely—after he had visited the Soviet Union—that he had "seen the future and it works." He did not yet know why it works, not clearly, but what he knew he knew. Over him there still was a thick overlay of his old ideas, an encrustment not easy for the septuagenarian to scrape off, yet he could laugh heartily, and he would roar, as Bob, wearing a tasselled stocking cap over his big bald head would have a go at him. "The old dog and new tricks, Bob," he mocked. "It's too late to make a Communist of me." He played the stubborn man, which he was, as they argued over passages in his manuscript, his *Autobiography,* which he had given Bob to read. It was an exihilarating book, Bob felt, an entire age was in it, in the lifetime of this old brave who had lived in Abe Lincoln's time and had come up through the green years of the Robber Barons and who had made his considerable dent on those years. "A fine book, Steff," Bob said, warmly, "but," and tossing a page of the manuscript at the older man, "how in hell can you let this stand?" He referred to some section or another with which he disagreed. Steff, tiny, agile for all his age, bright, dark eyes glittering with his love for combat, hopped like a sparrow around

the big man who sat on the easychair, in his bathrobe, the comical headgear covering his bald pate. "Damn it Bob," he mocked, "if I didn't love you I could never admit you're right, you're so godawful sure of yourself." Bob's ideas, Marxism, were right, "but rigid." Of course, he agreed, Socialism is inevitable, made the only sense he could accept after a lifetime of search, wandering in the wilderness, friend of publican and sinner. "And of saint," he insisted. He said he regarded Marxism as dogma, a code of good, but its protagonists were stiff, unbending men, like the old Calvinists. "I had more fun with the crooks," he laughed. "And you, Bob," he said, "are the worst of Calvinists."

The fur flew, and Lydia watched, cutting it short sometime when she thought Bob was taxing his strength, but she enjoyed listening to the men. Here was Steff, she thought, a liberal of the old school, but capable of accepting the new, and Bob, one of the new men, able to discern the good in the old. Two eras dovetailed here, the best of the old fitting securely into the new. Whatever hesitance, differences Steff had, born of his past, he aired here as though he still believed them, but, in fact, he set them up, like an attendant at a clay pigeon shoot, for Bob to bring down. Much of the argument centered about the place of a Communist movement in today's society, the relationship of individuals to the party, and to history. Steffens exaggerated the part "great men" played in history, underestimated the social and economic laws, "the fight of forces" that operated about them "and in them," as Bob said. True, Lenin was great, one of the titans of all time, but his greatness lay precisely in his ability to evaluate his era, the interplay of social and economic forces, and to adduce a program based upon that knowledge. Bob talked of Plekhanov's classic work on the individual and his role in society, and painstakingly related the events and policies that led to the triumph of the working class in old Russia. Lydia could feel Steff shift ground, grudgingly always, often mockingly. But he was coming around.

The black clouds of the depression lay over the little Westchester town where the two knights jousted. Steff, a man with a sharp eye that was sympathetic to mankind, was profoundly moved as the Hoovervilles sprouted across the rich acres of our nation. He had many questions as he corrected the page proofs of the book that summed up his years. The questions took their

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disturbingly clear shape in the midwaters of another great sea-change in his life. His thought, quickened by his talks with Bob, raced on and his *Autobiography* does not encompass the entirety of his life. Two years later, after Steff had returned to die on his beloved Pacific shore, he wrote: "Nobody in the world proposes anything basic and real except the Communists." And January of 1933 he wrote that he "stood for Communism as the cure, the only sure cure." He became a member of the Communist Party of the United States before he died. The muckraker who wanted to clean the Augean stables of capitalism had learned how.

Friends traveled up the Hudson from the city to see Bob: Communists who had worked with him and loved him. They came, careful not to tax him, but to bring him what they knew he wanted: news of his party, of the working class, its failures and its successes. Jack Stachel came often, a dark figure whose spirit and deft ideas leaped through his black cavernous eyes and who was so much part of his vaulting ideas that he never sat still as he talked, but sprang, sometimes with such vehemence into his thought that an old chair on which he sat collapsed under him. He rose from the floor, holding the pieces of the chair in his hands, and continued the pursuit of his thought to its end. There was Anna Damon, a lovely soft-voiced woman whose gracious manner concealed a steely strength, whose work for the International Labor Defense on behalf of workingmen in jail had made her a leader. She came bringing news of the various cases, observing quickly whether Bob was strong enough now to hear these stories, and once, he said to her, softly, and she never forgot it, "I go to jail with every man they send to prison."

The Boys of Scottsboro

THOUGH HIS recovery seemed to take forever as he grumbled to Lydia, he set about organizing his time as he would organize people. Four hours a day to read, an hour to write, and for the afternoon break, a cup of tea with Lydia. Half an hour to stretch his legs, pace the little stone terrace under the elm, its great branches beginning tot take on the green of the spring. No, damn it, it wasn't easy to apply a stern discipline to himself when he read the news. The depression had taken on momentum like an avalanche, nine millions out of work now, and probably more to come before it had run its course. He cursed himself for being on the sidelines as he read in the *Daily Worker* of the Hunger Marches threading their way to the state capitals, to the nation capital itself, thousands joining the marches on the way, greeting the caravans of battered cars and old trucks as though they were bright conquering armies of liberation. But for the time being, he could not march with them so he prepared himself for the day when he would be back on the firing line. Books and books and books, study and study and study.

His old friend Alexander Trachtenberg, the publisher, a bright-eyed, bald man with a bristling black mustache, jovial, sparkling with energy and ideas, a happy warrior too, came often up the New York Central, his latest and beloved books under his arm, and they would talk into the night, of history, politics, Lenin's works, Marx's, comparing, contrasting, seeking the thread of continuity, the hidden truths beneath the daily phenomena. Lydia loved to hear the hum of their voices that was so frequently punctuated by Trachty's bursts of hearty laughter, this gifted scholar, graduate of Trinity and Yale, yet who was so

different from those whose voices and spirit had become muted within the ivy-covered walls of sedate universities. She knew how Bob looked forward to these visits from this short, wiry man who had come to this country a student, now an economist, editor, political leader, a man of inexhaustible energy like her Bob. Most of all, Trachty brought Bob books on the Negro in America, books that dealt with nationhood, the national question, the matter which possessed Bob from his earliest political days in his party.

He wrote long letters to his comrades on these issues, speaking earnestly of the need to study Stalin's definition of the nation, for Bob was convinced that the Negro in the South was oppressed as a subjected nation is oppressed. Every indignity he suffered, every damned act of Jim Crow, every lynching, must be seen in context of the Bourbon design to hold the vast, powerful Negro mass under bootjack rule.

One day, March 25, 1931, Bob opened his copy of the *Daily Worker* to learn that nine Negro boys hoboing through the South on the hunt for work had been dragged from a freight train by an armed posse, at Paint Rock, Alabama, near a town called Scottsboro, and held on charges of rape.

Bob clamored there, forty miles up the Hudson from New York, for every fact that came from the metropolis. He read the *Southern Worker* which carried the initial first-hand accounts, this brave Communist paper edited in the heart of the South by James S. Allen. Bob knew, without hesitance, that these boys were innocent, but he demanded facts that would prove their innocence to the millions whose minds were captives of the Bourbon press.

It is easy to construct his thought as he read the columns in the papers, the facts in the letters, heard the ideas of his friends who came visiting, men like J. Louis Engdahl, the big, slow-spoken, solid Midwesterner who headed the International Labor Defense, or Bob's favorite lawyer, as he would call Joseph Brodsky, a laughing, fighting, roaring roly-poly of a man with a brilliant legal mind who had plunged into the case from the first.

The very terms of the case were so tragically familiar, even to the rumbling freight train which had carried Bob thousands of miles in his youth across the southern plains hunting work. He would know how a rumor that work was to be found in a town,

any town, a hundred, two hundred, five hundred miles off, would start an exodus of hungry men and boys, women as well. He had stood with them in freight yards, waiting, had run for the freight and swung up the ladder with them. He could see them, in his mind's eye, seated high on the boxcars, ragged birds of passage, heading for strange and distant places, moving on, into the new, to hunt that bonanza of 1931, a job.

So with these nine Negro boys, none yet twenty-one, three not yet sixteen, the youngest thirteen. He is with them when the white boys on the train, minds corroded by the southern bias, had tried to push them off. Bob knows the free-for-all that would follow, the Negroes defending their dignity and their rights, scorning the possible tragic consequences to them. Two white young women, clad in overalls, were on the train heading for the textile towns of Alabama. Bob can hear the lewd excitement in the sheriff's office at Paint Rock when The Law learned of two white women. The story would leap into vast dimensions, and naturally the cry of "Rape" would come. Bob can see the black-hatted deputies waving their pistols and their shotguns triumphantly when the boys are herded into a line, handcuffed, the animal cry "We got them" rising in the village under the soft southern sky.

Children to the faggot! Within nine days after the arrest they stand, tattered, dishevelled, frightened, in the courtroom, the icy sea of hard, hostile white faces about them, and they hear the arraignment on charges that carry the death penalty. A week later their trial opens, the boys "defended," God save the mark, by a rumpot of a lawyer who had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan. Bob can hear the band from a local hosiery mill playing "There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," the drums banging, the cornets blaring. Two thousand whites are drawn in from the back country and from the hills, many toting rifles, as they moved back and forth beneath the courtroom windows, passing the jugs of corn-likker around. The Jackson *Sentinel* called on "All good men and true southerners to be alert," and to "take the shortest way out." The headline was reproduced throughout the nation as the press described the boys as "rapists."

The trial closed the day it opened, the verdict death, for all nine.

Bob overrode Lydia's fears. He had dallied long enough with doctors and medicines. He *had* to go to town, to his party's headquarters, to the I.L.D. To work, to work. Lydia knew there was no holding him. She drove him down to the Croton railroad station, watched him as he mounted the steps of the train, waving at her, smiling brilliantly. On the river side where he always sat, his eyes were grateful to the broad, lovely majesty of the valley, the hills rolling under the clouds, the Palisades rising in their sheer cliffs and he thought of the small, black cell where nine Negro lads looked through the bars. He took out his pad and made notes: "Left to the Bourbons, it would mean not only the death of innocents, but would touch off a giant pogrom against all Negroes in the South, and elsewhere in the nation. Fought properly, the boys can be saved." But to save them, to forestall the lynch orgy against thousands more, the truth of the Negroes' lot in America must be brought to the country. The case would not be won if it were fought as an isolated tragedy, seen only as the result of prejudice, ignorance, racism. We must get at the root of the matter and "the roots were to be found in the national oppression of an entire people."

He was elated to discover that his party's national committee had come to these conclusions, and that the Communists in the South had already taken the first steps to rally defense for the boys.

You might think, a quarter of a century later, that all right-minded people would understand the Communist Party's adjurations. It was not so then, and there are far too many today who still do not understand, though many more do. Many friends of the Negro people, even some Negroes themselves, hesitated to speak on behalf of the nine imprisoned boys. Wasn't it a "rape" case? Some leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were loath to summon the force of their organization, feeling somehow, that their just cause would be diminished if they came to the support of victims charged with rape. Support must be quiet, "respectable," sub-rosa, so to speak. Do nothing that will rouse the ire of the Confederate-minded law courts of Alabama. This was not the estimate of the Communist leaders, nor of J. Louis Engdahl, and the others who led the I.L.D. But enough of an overlap of such ideas existed to require the fullest clarification, and this

Bob assayed. His party regarded him as the most experienced figure in such matters in its ranks. His comrades of the national committee assigned him to represent them in the leading body of the defense organization.

His voice was heard in the councils of the I.L.D.; pale, his strength laggard, not yet full, he attended committee meetings into the dawn hours, began to speak at great mass meetings, and everywhere he told the same story. The boys can be saved: work, work, work, explain, explain, explain.

As Bob moved into action he was gladdened to discover that Communists in the South were not caught napping, as too many others were. They had hastened to the Scottsboro courthouse on the day of frenzied arraignment, they were the ones who sent out the first full news stories. They had visited some of the parents of the Scottsboro boys, explained their position, their desire to help, and had won their grateful agreement. Bob read a letter from a southern Communist who told how Mrs. Ada Wright, the mother of two of the Scottsboro boys, had come to work—a housemaid—and had collapsed when the news was brought her. And the climate of the times was such that her employer, a man of some humanity evidently, had advised her, upon learning her tragedy, to seek out the Communists who were probably, he said, the only ones who could help.

Bob learned that the Communist leaders in New York had been summoned by Joseph Brodsky, that tireless and courageous fighter, the night he got the news from Richard B. Moore, a magnificent Negro orator and ILD leader who was in his office when the wire arrived from the I.L.D. representative in Chattanooga, who had watched that farce of a trial at Scottsboro. They had gathered at once, at midnight, worked out a statement to send to the metropolitan newspapers and news services, alerting the nation against the threatened lynching. The I.L.D. sent legal representatives South to storm their way into the prison to see the defendants themselves, and to enter appeals to the first trial.

The date for the execution had been set, but the Communist partisans of the Negro boys, of the Negro people, refused to accept that as final. And it was not. They won a stay after Brodsky presented arguments that due process was violated, the boys had not had a fair trial, no, not with a band playing "There'll Be a Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight," the town

full of hostile spectators whose cries for blood could be heard by the jury inside.

Bob's opinions were sought by those who headed the defense, and daily he came, still ill, carrying bottles of medicine with him, to meet with them, listening to their proposals, and always he offered his own wisdom born of his experience.

There were no Negroes on the jury, he said, studying the record of the trial, an obvious denial of the constitutional rights of the Negro people, rights of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments won by the blood of countless thousands in the Civil War. The rights of Negroes to serve on juries, to be part of the juridical process, must be a key issue in the case, he exclaimed. It became a vital part of the defense, the first time this issue was tried in the courts. Bob insisted that every possible witness be searched out, here and there a white might be found who would testify to the truth. More: every scrap of fact about the two white women, Ruby Bates and Virginia Price, must be dug up, he demanded, recalling his unionist investigators in the Mooney case who had discovered that Estelle Smith was a prostitute and drug addict, and that the Edeau women and many other prosecution witnesses were underworld characters.

I.L.D. investigators went into Huntsville, Alabama, the home town of the two women who accused the Negro boys and discovered that Victoria Price was a prostitute who had brought her younger companion, Ruby, under her influence.

Unsparing of himself, he spared nobody. "Yes," he wrote, the first week of May 1931, the May Day marches in a hundred cities had shown some good results for the Scottsboro case "in agitation and demonstration," but the Negro masses were not drawn into the demonstrations "as active, organized participants." Agitational work was a beginning, a good beginning, and it was to the party's credit; had made possible "the first small legal victory for the Scottsboro defendants—the securing of a change of venue." Good. But the work of organization, at rock-bottom, *that* required "instant improvement." Talk, explanation, was not enough; "enroll your neighbors in Scottsboro Committees that must be formed everywhere." Nor was "enrollment" enough. Hold meetings in Negro and white homes of these neighborhood committees, encourage them to bring forward their own creative proposals. "In short, it is in the non-party masses where

we must find the leading forces to help organize the mass movement."

He overlooked no detail: form committees in factories, organize local United Front conferences "in the latter half of this month," follow these conferences "with bigger ones."

The nation inevitably felt the impact. The Hunger Marchers throughout the land spoke of Scottsboro as they spoke of bread; the nation's newspaper columns began to fill with stories of the case; Scottsboro marches wound through the streets of New York, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles.

The Negro people came to recognize their true friends, their surest allies. Churches throughout the Negro community invited Communists to speak on the case, South as well as North. Negro newspapers, by the scores, began to reflect the reality seething within their community. Many like the *Florida Sentinel* said: "No group of white men has made so bold an attempt to defend the Negro and to work religiously for his protection as the Communists."

Communists "have shown a total disregard for color prejudice and lack of appreciation for station and titles. They have accepted the black man on equal plane with all other workers throughout the world and seem willing to toil for his elevation as they do for all others of their group."

The influential *Afro-American,* of Baltimore, wrote, under the headline "No Menacing Reds," "In fact, there is more real Christianity among white Communists than in the white Y.M.C.A., the white Christian Endeavor Societies, or the white, so-called Christian churches." The newspaper concluded, "The Reds are no menace to Negroes. In fact, it is very comforting to find groups of such people as Communists in this color-mad western world."

It was a long, hard-fought, drawn-out crusade: court appeal followed court appeal; demonstration followed demonstration. One of the Scottsboro mothers and Engdahl traveled abroad to speak at demonstrations on behalf of the victims, roaring meetings met them, and Engdahl, worn by his speeches and work, came down with pneumonia while there and died. A brilliant, two-fisted Negro crusader, William L. Patterson, had become the head of the I.L.D.; a man of boundless courage and energy, with a gift for working with all who would come along even a fraction of the necessary way; his qualities inspired thousands.

The concept came across, to millions, that lynchings need not be perpetrated by hooded men in the light of the moon; it could be done, and was done, as Bob wrote time and again, "legally," with all the stately flumdummery of the courts. Multitudes came to understand the term "legal lynching." They marched in Harlem, in Seattle, they marched before the Supreme Court of the United States where the guards attacked them with tear-gas and nightsticks. But that very afternoon, November 7, 1932, the United States Supreme Court reversed the decision of the Alabama courts which had upheld the death penalty, reversed it on the constitutional grounds Bob had insisted on—the patent violation by the Alabama courts of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. New trials were won, great united front organizations came into existence; leaders of the NAACP who had lagged in the case found it necessary to join the others who saw, by now, that the tactics of the I.L.D., the Communists, were not only appropriate to the battle, they were imperative.

The "breaks" came, as Bob had foreseen. Ruby Bates, one of the two women who testified at the first trial that she had been raped, came to the I.L.D. offices and admitted that she had lied. She joined the ranks of the defenders, trying, as best she could, to atone for her crime. Even the New York *Daily Mirror* published her story in a series of articles. The truth of the case became clear to all but the most benighted racists. And the courts, slowly, as is their wont, were compelled to concede many of the truths.

The Supreme Court of the land had ruled that Negroes had the right to serve on juries, that they were denied their constitutional rights if they were kept off the jury panels—an epic advance for which the struggle led by the I.L.D. was responsible. The Bourbons, fighting desperately, retreated slowly, and it was not until July 24, 1937, after the fifth trial, that four of the boys were freed, the rape charges dropped. None were executed, however, and finally the last of the defendants, Haywood Patterson, walked out of prison.

In the interim the nation came to understand, far more clearly than it ever had, the tragic picture of the Negro in the South. Many came to see, as Bob did, as his comrades did, from the outset, that the case could never have been won unless it was understood—not in isolation nor as an exceptional act of

official and juridical violence—but as a single crimson strand in the warp and woof of American society, of capitalism and imperialism. Scottsboro was won because every source of strength had been tapped, not only for the courtroom, but for the greater fight outside. The ideas, the loyalties, the simple decencies of tens of thousands, millions, had been mobilized.

The significance of Scottsboro had a lasting effect on the course of the Thirties. As men strove against hunger, as they counter-attacked to create their great trade unions, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, the expansion of the American Federation of Labor, the slogans, issues, and lessons of Scottsboro sharpened their consciousness to the need for unity, the merged power of black and white. Americans of both races who sat together in the neighborhood committees and in the united front organizations for Scottsboro continued to sit together and to march together, on other issues—trade union, economic, political. They became aware of their united might.

Equally important, a new sense of awareness arose within the Negro fifteen million: they could achieve unity with their white brothers and sisters through the medium of the labor movement. That unity advanced the interests of both. The epic struggle on behalf of the Scottsboro boys set the tone for an entire epoch.

The Communists made this possible, Bob knew. Doors opened to them everywhere in the Negro communities, north and south. They were welcomed by sharecroppers in the distant backroads country of the Black Belt, in the vast sprawling slums of New York, Chicago, Detroit. They had seen the Communists, in action, saw them face bludgeon and jail and defamation, learned that theirs was a party of Negro as well as white. "They have," as the *Florida Sentinel* wrote, "accepted the black man on equal plane with all other workers throughout the world."

In the course of this long struggle many Negroes joined the Communist Party, men like Benjamin J. Davis, son of a prominent Negro family of Georgia, graduate of Amherst and Harvard. A man of exceptional talents, a lawyer, he had offered his services to defend a young Negro Communist named Angelo Herndon, arrested, before the Scottsboro boys, because he had led a demonstration of hungry Negro and white unemployed in Atlanta. Davis became an attorney for the I.L.D. in the Scottsboro case, and he met Bob who exulted as he

looked at this tall, handsome man, broad-shouldered, dark-faced, forehead noble, reminding Bob of Shakespeare's Othello. The two became fast friends and Bob was elated to hear Davis' thoughtful inquiries about Marxism, Communism; they talked long into the night and the young Negro lawyer went on to become a foremost leader of the Communist Party who was later elected twice to the City Council of New York. Hundreds of Negroes, thousands, became members of the Communist Party, like the worker Pettis Perry, who heard of the Scottsboro case and the Communists' part in it, sought out the Communists, joined them, learned to read and write in their ranks, and like Davis, became a gifted leader and theoretician.

CHILD LABOR (1925)

South to Freedom

To MANY, as Bob approached his forty-ninth birthday, mankind seemed to teeter on the abyss. The world watched Germany where the neat valleys and gabled towns echoed to the tramp of the stormtrooper.

Bob and his party read the portents, sounded the alarums for America. Truly, which way our land? Here, too, you heard the raucous voice of the fascist, the Brownshirt, the Bund, the Knight of the White Camelia, who swore their blood-curdling oaths in secret, and increasingly often, in open and defiant ceremony. They had their affluent, moneyed and respectable patrons. Enough Wall Street bankers sought a fascist solution to the crisis for some to plot a march on Washington, offering General Smedley E. Butler of the Marine Corps the job of generalissimo, as he revealed. Crack-pots? That's what the liberals of the Weimar Republic had called Hitler.

But outweighing all this were the awakened brigades of the jobless, the wrathful multitudes who rode on trucks, jalopies, old trucks enroute to the state capitals and to Washington. And, as time flowed on in its furious tempo, their brothers in the factories, at the job, began their march, in unison.

The Trade Union Unity League was increasingly a power; its members worked stubbornly and well in thousands of factories, forming their knots of the most militant and most farsighted, outwitting the surveillance of the company's Gestapo, as at the Ford plant. There Communists like hardy old Bill McKie found ways to circumvent the brigades of stool pigeons. So in the rest of auto, in steel, in rubber, in maritime, in other industries. Strikes like those of the coal miners in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, flared, under the leadership of Foster's TUUL, their example inspiring others, and gradually, yet

swiftly, as history is measured, created the basis for the birth of industrial unions, the C.I.O.

The Communist program of the Twenties was the seed-bed for the flowering of the Thirties. For a decade the Communists had taught the need to amalgamate the craft unions into industrial unions: it was happening. Foster's arguments were winning many ears among the laboring people.

The Republicans of Hoover had been swept from office in the 1932 elections, the new president was still an unknown quantity. He had some rare gift of heartening words, "We have nothing to fear but fear itself," he said in his inaugural address, but it was too soon then to know which way his Blue Eagle, symbol of the National Recovery Act, would fly. Its system of codes for all industries and workingmen could lead to a corporative state like Mussolini's. But the workingmen, led by those in its van, and primarily these were the Communists, came to believe that they, the common men, could help determine the eagle's course. Imperceptibly almost, but nonetheless palpably, a coalition of similar intents, wills, desires, aspirations, was forming. The hungry of labor moved along the same paths the Negroes trod, the same hard road the small farmers and the city middle classes walked and all roads were leading to the New Deal.

Roosevelt, his advisers, sensed that spirit and did not accept the counsel of those who would carry the land to fascism. Capitalism, the new president believed, or grew to believe, could be mended best by ceding ground to the indignant masses of America. History proved him right although he won the hatred of most of the capitalists he rescued. Perhaps his policies forestalled the formation of an independent party of labor; instead the workingmen and their allies formed the New Deal coalition around and within the Democratic Party.

The awakening political mind of the masses brought many more to understand the meaning of the Communists.

What was happening in the working class had its reflections in the middle class. Many professionals, artists, writers, felt the whiplash of the time and some fifty prominent writers formed a Committee to Elect Foster and James W. Ford, Communist candidates for president and vice-president of the United States in 1932. Bob read their manifesto, "Culture and the Crisis," discussed it with Lydia who was diligently engaged in the activi-

ties of the John Reed Club, a progressive organization of writers and artists that was formed several years before.

The *Liberator's* work had cut a trail in its time, Bob mused, and if some of its collaborators had fled into the literary wasteland of the Twenties, like Max Eastman who had found the allurement of the flesh-pots preferable to the disciplines and truths of the working class, the crisis had enlisted many new recruits, many more than those who had fled. "Others will run again," Bob said, "will discover reasons to run. Art is above politics, they will say, and then take jobs with the political enemy of all that they stood for yesterday. But the best will stay." He said new writers, new artists, will side with the working class as that class grows in strength, for the righteousness of its cause, its inevitable triumph, will be sensed by the best of artists. He spoke of Maxim Gorky, and Anatole France, of Romain Rolland and George Bernard Shaw who had written "Marx made a man of me," of Martin Anderson Nexo whom he had met in Moscow, the great Danish writer who came from Social Democracy to the Communists.

Not all of these were Communists, Bob reflected, but they stand with the future against the past, know right from wrong. He talked of Theodore Dreiser, whom he had known many years, that titan of the American novel, who went into the coalfields during the Penn-Ohio-West Virginia strike, and soon afterward to Kentucky where the sheriffs had tried to frame him. Bob predicted that Dreiser would come to see that Marxism is the only answer to the human and social problems he posed. He reflected on the lifetimes of Goya, of Daumier, Goya who had gone into exile in Paris because the could not bend to the Spanish reaction after the Napoleonic war, Daumier, the old Communard, who had sat in prison because he remained faithful to the French working class.

Bob considered the work of John Dos Passos, Waldo Frank, Malcolm Cowley, Granville Hicks, John Howard Lawson, James T. Farrell, Erskine Caldwell, Horace Gregory, Nelson Algren, Michael Gold, the many others who were appearing in the *New Masses.* "Yes, some will run and some will stay," he said, to Lydia, singling Mike Gold out as the best of the best.

He had known Mike since the days of the old *Masses,* this great-hearted son of the East Side who had never wavered and whose piece on Thornton Wilder, in 1930, had the rugged vigor

and crystal imagery Bob relished. With his colored pencil he had underscored Mike's questions: "Is this the style to express America? Is this the speech of a pioneer continent? Will this discreet French drawing room hold all the blood, horror, and hope of the world's new empire? Is this the language of the intoxicated Emerson? Or the clean rugged Thoreau or vast Whitman? Where are the modern streets of New York, Chicago, and New Orleans in these little novels? Where are the cotton mills, and the murder of Ella May and her songs? Is Mr. Wilder a Swede or a Greek or an American? No stranger would know from the books he has written."

On his forty-ninth birthday Bob, the choice of his party, ran for mayor of the biggest city of the world. The graduate of Welfare Island was boomed for City Hall. His strength had returned and he was on a thousand platforms, on street corners and in the halls of the Unemployed Councils, in Harlem, in Brooklyn, and in the city's colleges. You will find stories in the press of the day like this one in the New York *Journal*: "Corporation Counsel Arthur W. Hilly in an address at City College yesterday assured students that Mayor O'Brien would continue appropriations for higher education if re-elected to office. Hilly's address followed a speech by Robert Minor, Communist candidate for Mayor. Minor was given an ovation, the applause lasting several minutes." Or the letter in the New York *Post* August 8, 1933: "I know what the candidates of the major parties stand for. I for one am going to vote for Robert Minor, a man as powerful and as clean and as idealistic as were our greatest Americans." These were exceptional instances, for the big newspapers, in the main, drew a thick curtain over the Communist campaign, and only the *Daily Worker* gave the full story.

Unemployment relief continued to be the primary issue, that and the intentions of the bankers to raise the subway fare to seven cents, a cruel hardship for those who counted their scarce pennies these days. Characteristically, Bob mastered the details of the relief set-up and the transit authority. He strode onto the platform, a tall, rangy, bald-headed figure, gripping a sheaf of notes. Each page had a few inch-sized, carefully written words, guides to his memory and to the structure of his speech. He managed always to find some clear, brilliant image that

would bring the statistics alive and he spoke eloquently, in a clear, resonant voice, each word carefully enunciated, the vowels held a shade longer than most Northerners would hold them. His air of absorbing sincerity enthralled his listeners, who came to call him "Fighting Bob."

Everywhere he emphasized the plight of the Negroes, the identity of their cause with that of the whites, and the need for cooperation between the two. The *Worker* described his day, a typical one as the campaign drew to a close: "Earlier, the three largest boroughs of the city rang with the call to vote Communist as workmen followed Bob Minor, the Communist candidate, in torchlight processions through the streets. The parades continued late into the night. He spoke at Post No. 2, Negro branch of the National War Veterans, with 1,500 members, and they voted to support Minor for mayor at a meeting in their headquarters, 1888 Fulton St., Brooklyn." Everywhere the numbers of Negroes attending his meetings grew. As we have seen, Bob was never one to underestimate the innate power of the Negro populace, and everywhere he spoke of the Scottsboro case, and other similar cases that exploded through the nation.

In the course of his campaign he crusaded on behalf of Euel Lee, a Negro farmhand of Maryland's Eastern shore, framed on murder charges, convicted and sentenced to die. The I.L.D. had supplied Bob with every fact on the case, he knew its details as he knew those of the Scottsboro boys. He told his audiences precisely how the Negro had been framed, precisely how his Constitutional rights were violated in the courts. His passionate exposition of the case, the campaigning of the *Worker* and his party, had brought the tragic episode to the attention of millions.

Bob wrote Governor Albert C. Ritchie of Maryland, after Lee's conviction, pleading for the man's life. It was known that the governor was concerned with his prestige as a liberal, for it was a time when all politicians looked anxiously to their reputations with the masses moving leftward. There might be a shadow of possibility that Ritchie would respond through some form of executive action and save Lee's life. Telegrams from Bob's meetings in New York went to the governor by the thousand, as they did from all northern cities. Bob, as candidate for mayor, signed some of the telegrams.

Ritchie wrote Bob from his Executive Manion at Annapolis, addressing his letter to "Robert Minor, Esq., Communist candidate for Mayor of New York City." The governor said acidly he was answering Bob's letter because anyone "who runs for so high an office as the mayor of New York should be interested in the truth." Euel Lee, Maryland's chief executive said, was "convicted justly."

"I consider it inexcusable that you," the Governor concluded, "a supposedly responsible person, and without any knowledge of the facts of the case, should presume to charge that there has been a frame-up or that Lee was innocent."

Ritchie's last words tolled like a death bell: "The sentence of the court was carried out last night, and Lee was hung for the murders of which he was guilty beyond the slightest doubt at all."

A committee on behalf of Euel Lee had been formed in Maryland and it scheduled a mass meeting November 10, in Baltimore, to protest the legal lynching. The committee invited Bob to speak. He persuaded the committee to allow him to invite Governor Ritchie to be present.

Fifteen hundred Negroes and whites crowded Baltimore's Albert Hall. On the platform sat Mary Van Kleeck, prominent sociologist, Countee Cullen, the famous Negro poet; Charles Houston, Negro attorney of Washington; Benjamin J. Davis, of Atlanta, Ga.; Dr. A. E. Blumberg, of the faculty of Johns Hopkins (who was later to join the Communist Party and to become its legislative director); Mrs. Laura B. Glenn, director of the Negro Department of Social Work, of Washington; Mrs. Mary Church Terrell, chairman of the National Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, and Mrs. Cravath Simpson, president of the Federation of Women's Clubs. These, and they were not all, afford a sense of the scope the Communist-inspired struggle against lynching in all the forms it was assuming.

The Governor did not attend. After the others had spoken, Bob rose, and addressed himself to the audience and to Governor Ritchie as though he were present on the platform. The reporters scribbled furiously as Bob spoke in a fury he could not contain.

Bob carefully developed his crushing arguments. In the first trial, the jury was illegally selected from an old list in order to ensure the lynch verdict which came through in thirty-two

minutes. After the Communists intervened, and brought the case to public light, the first verdict was upset. The second trial differed from the first only in the sense that the officers of the law laid on a thicker cover of subterfuge—"the few Negroes on the jury panel were eliminated by peremptory challenge and the same results were obtained, with what on the surface appeared to be a legal jury."

The Governor had contended Lee's constitutional rights were protected. Why, Bob thundered, did the judge deny the defendant the right to choose his own attorney, Bernard Ades, who had a retainer from Lee as defense counsel? Why did the judge rule that Ades had "no standing in that court?" Constitutional rights? The mayor of Snow Hill, scene of the trial, issued a statement prohibiting the lawyers of the I.L.D. from entering town on their appointed business of defending the Negro. This refusal had incited a mob that tried to lynch Ades and his assistant, Mrs. Helen Marcy, "the two compelled to seek refuge in the local jail."

Lee, Bob concluded, was denied every right "as a citizen or as a man."

"It was a lynching which took place inside the courtroom and on the gallows by the hands of the officers of the law—a brutal, inexcusable, cowardly lynching in which you, the Governor, participated." Nor was the murder of Euel Lee a solitary instance, "no exception, I say, but one more of a long list of murders, the most recent of which is the open lynching of George Armwood, at Princess Anne, Md., on October 18."

The Albert Hall meeting, the work of the Communists, of Bob, had inevitable repercussions, illustrative of the fruit of their labors. On the same page where the Baltimore *Sun* the next day carried the news of the assemblage, you saw this revealing story: the three judges of the First Judicial District had gathered to hear the facts about the Armwood lynching to which Bob had referred. Nine men known to have been ringleaders in the atrocity had been arrested. Now, the Attorney General wanted the facts from the County Attorney who had refused to arrest the guilty. Ritchie was under the unwelcome spotlight. He had refused to intervene, the *Sun* revealed.

A comment on the Governor's future is in order. Ritchie had been elected by the biggest plurality in the state's history,

the first man to be chosen governor twice. In the following election held within the year he was defeated by a crashing majority, "an aftermath of Scottsboro," Bob wrote, "an aftermath many politicians could not understand."

From Baltimore, Bob drove South, into that inferno. His associates of the national committee had proposed that he attend a number of Communist meetings in Birmingham and elsewhere in preparation for a report on the South he was to deliver at a forthcoming national convention of his party.

The ramshackle cabins of the sharecroppers leaned toward the ground, as before, Bob saw, driving hard for Birmingham. The faces were as bony as ever he had seen them, and passing through Georgia he stopped as a pack of loping bloodhounds crossed the highway, a chilling sight. What prey were they after now? He saw the haggard faces of the textile workers in the cotton towns. Yes, all this is familiar, all this is old, but there is something new.

He found the new. The district convention of his party in Birmingham was held on a remote picnic ground outside the city. Sentries stood on the lookout. He moved among the new members, the black and the white of the South, the Negroes dressed, he could see, in their best Sunday clothes as though they were attending church services. He moved among them, took their outstretched hands in both of his, and their faces inspired him. The plain, worn, yet unconquerable face of the South, his South. He listened carefully to their reports, sitting in the front row on the picnicker's bench, his hand cupped over his ear.

Ninety percent of the delegates had never before belonged to a union. He noted that a report said scarcely one had ever voted in his life or served on a jury. Many of the speeches contained references to the Almighty Whose good wishes they hoped were with them. Fifty-four percent were active church members: the meeting began with a hymn. But their faith in the Lord did not deter them from understanding the work of the Communist Party. "You are doing Jesus' work," one woman said, holding Bob's hand in both of hers. "May the Lord bless you and keep you." She was the secretary of the Communist group, and as Bob learned, one of the many Negro women who were becoming leaders, in their localities, of the Communist Party.

Birmingham, a grim city of steel, fascinated him. White and Negro were working side by side, the exigencies of industry bringing the two races together at labor. Inevitably, their common lot, their common hardship, would create the basis for a common endeavor in the trade unions, in politics. And they were in a fighting mood. "Already," he jotted in his notebook, using the red lead of his colored pencil, "there have been spontaneous struggles in coal mines and ore mines of the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company of the Republic Steel."

Everywhere he moved, he discovered "splendid new forces." Negro men and women, tall gaunt white men and women, were overcoming ancient prejudices to sit down together at meetings.

One page of his notebook says, in great letters, "A characteristic is the number of local leaders who a few months ago were illiterate, but who are now reading and explaining the *Daily Worker* and passing it around through dozens of hands until it is torn to pieces and pinned together for further use." The illiterates of yesterday were reading the most advanced ideas of today.

In a sharecropper's home down in Chambers County, where a Negro comrade brought him in the dead of night so that the landowners would not observe him, they told how they brought the *Daily Worker* to the cabins, using hollows in trees, often as secret mail-boxes. They spoke to him of Ralph Gray, the Negro veteran who was murdered at Camp Hill when they organized the Sharecroppers Union in the wake of the Scottsboro, told him of the price of cotton and the many ways the planter stole their proceeds. Oh, the courage of these people, his fellow-Americans, robbed of their bread, of books, of learning, of every human right, and yet they dared. They were rising again, despite bloodhound and inquisitor.

And the whites, "the poor whites," as the newspapers referred to them scornfully. Poor in goods, indeed yes, but they too were astir, and how much more of dross they must rid themselves, the malignant ideas of racial superiority—which some were beginning to shed. A spirited middle-aged woman in calico told him tartly how her "old man," her husband, had begun disappearing at certain evening hours several times a week, breaking their old routine. She had questioned him and he had replied vaguely. One day as she was about to wash his overalls she discovered a copy of the *Daily Worker* carefully

folded in a pocket. She opened it, glanced at the headlines, and she sat down by her washtub to read. It was a revelation. She was stirred by the news stories she read, the editorials, discovering ideas that no other newspaper in her ken had printed before. It made holy sense, even its stand on the Negroes. She instantly understood, she told Bob, that the white workingman of the South could not advance without the aid of his black neighbor. Yes, she had noticed how the employers pitted one against the other. When her husband returned from work that evening she confronted him with the paper. "You've been going to them Communist meetings," she said. And he was taken aback, silent. "Why didn't you take me along?" And he had replied, she told Bob indignantly, "Why, Mame, 'tain't for wimmen."

Bob roared as he heard the story. "Tain't for wimmen, eh?" He told her of the many places he had visited where women were becoming leaders and she listened, the smile on her face growing bigger and bigger as he talked. She dragged her husband to Bob and asked him to repeat, "for the old man's benefit, the rascal."

When Bob returned to New York he delivered a report to the Extraordinary Conference of his party, in July of 1933, that warned America of the fascist danger. The Blue Eagle, the National Recovery Act, had declared there must be no strikes. But the workingmen saw that the codes did not protect them: they allowed prices to rise, but wages did not keep pace. Inevitably the workingmen struck, despite the opposition of their leaders.

The Communists supported these strikes, led many of them, for no other recourse remained to those who refused to see their living standards depressed to levels that made life unbearable. "Write your own codes on the picket lines," the Communist conference advised. That year of 1933, more than 900,000 had struck, thrice the number of 1932. The Trade Union Unity League, under the leadership of Jack Stachel, Jack Johnstone and James Ford after Foster had come down with a heart attack in the 1932 electoral campaign, led 200,000 workers in strikes: 16,000 in auto of Detroit, 5,000 steel workers in Ambridge, Pa., 3,000 miners in Western Pennsylvania, 12,000 shoe workers in New York, 15,000 needle trades workers in New York, 18,000 cotton pickers and 3,000 grape pickers in California and

Arizona, and 2,100 packinghouse workers in Pittsburgh. The A.F.L. grew, that year, by half a million, independent unions by 150,000, the Trade Union Unity League by 100,000. The T.U.U.L. now had more than 125,000 members.

The Communists' Extraordinary Conference outlined a program, stressing the importance of creating units of the party and of the trade unions in the nation's chief industries. Bob spoke of the South, the advance he had observed. Scottsboro, he said, was the Dred Scott decision of today, quickening the process of history. Negro and white were beginning to march together.

"WE'LL FIGHT!" —*Daily Worker*, 1925

Kidnapping in the Desert

THE MONTHS fled by and a workingman could mark each day on the calendar as one of achievement—and trial. Labor's counter-attack was in furious crescendo: almost a million and a half workingmen struck in 1934, for pay rises and for the recognition of their unions. Everywhere the employers, translating the terms of the Blue Eagle in their light, and to their interests, brought out the machine-guns of the police, the militia. Pick up any newspaper and you found news of tragedy, workingmen shot dead on picketlines or killed surreptitiously by company gunmen.

Sixteen were shot dead in the national textile strike of 1934; many more in the coal strike. When the police of San Francisco murdered two workingmen, one of them Nick Bordois, a Communist, the unions there replied with a general strike, a high point in the history of American labor.

America's workingmen were fighting desperately, every way they knew. So 1934 passed: the struggle went into 1935. One day, April 5, Bob picked up the New York *Times* to read that hell had broken loose in far-off Gallup, New Mexico, not far from his home state of Texas. Miners of that town, evicted by agents of the Gallup-American Coal Company, had been arrested because they returned to their homes. Charged with "breaking and entering"—their own houses—they were brought to trial, April 4. The miners demonstrated at the scene of the trial on behalf of their union brothers who had been evicted. The sheriff of the town and his deputies fired tear-gas at them, and then bullets. One miner was killed, four wounded. When the gas cloud blew away, the sheriff himself lay dead, two deputies were wounded. Another miner died in the hospital several days later.

The authorities went beserk in retaliation: eight hundred men and women were arrested, another hundred were held

without warrant for deportation, about one-sixth of the entire population of Gallup. Forty-eight men, ten women, were held on murder charges. The machinery of frame-up began to move.

The Communist Party asked Bob to go into the state and to propose ways to save the lives of the miners. He bade goodbye to Lydia once again and he was off.

The bald-headed man with the high, uncreased forehead, the jutting chin and glinting brown eyes sat over the wheel of his Ford as it sped across U.S. Highway 1, through the states of his south, that lovely, yet lonely, tragic land of his fathers.

Passing a solitary black man in overalls, standing in the fields, he waved at him, thinking you will not stand sad, hungry, much longer. Something welled up in him as he thought of his party's struggles, his own, the march of the Americans, white and black headed to the destiny history demanded. He thought of himself: fifty years old now, the party had observed his natal day. Telegrams of congratulations came to him from all cities of the country, from the poor, his people, the workingmen, from the families of the Scottsboro boys, from Tom Mooney, still in prison, and from the leaders of men, Bill Foster, Ike Amter, his old prison-mates. Half a century on this earth, the greatest of all times to live.

As he passed through the country of old Sam Houston who had tried to save his beloved empire for the Union, he wrote Lydia that night: "I don't think it is at all bad for my capacity to deal with the tremendous work that I want to do, that I am soaked in the traditions of America, born in a somewhat tragic time and section, reared in, not one, but a thousand ways, and thus given both an instinct for and a keen curiosity concerning the forces that are for this country."

Bob stopped in Phoenix, before going down to Gallup. He had a letter from a Mexican-American who knew the story of the events the day when the shooting took place. The man was in hiding, compelled to fly for his life. Bob believed that this man was a key to the case. Find him and perhaps he could confirm the facts he had put in his letter so they could stand in court where every legal obstacle would be posed by the prosecution to blockade the truth. Bob was meticulous in these cases. Experience taught him that every fact must be checked and checked again until it was fool-proof. The man who wrote him could prove that all the workers arrested were framed: that is what the letter said.

He found the man, thin, lithe, about thirty-five, who looked so like the Mexicans Bob knew as a boy. Eyes aglow, his glossy black hair fell over his forehead; graceful in motion, with long, hard fingers, his face bore the small blue pocks of the coal miner. The man knew Bob from his pictures in the papers, he said, and he welcomed Bob with an embrace in the Latin fashion. Over a glass of red wine that he poured Bob he told his story. He was one of those arrested for returning to their homes, and he had seen all that had transpired when the police threw their gas bombs and fired on the demonstrators.

The crowd had protested the trial. "I began to speak for my release when the sheriff jumped on me and beat me with his fist in the presence of the judge who said nothing." His cries were heard by the crowd outside which set up a tumult. The sheriff pushed him into a side room and began to choke him. One of the deputies said to two others, "You open the door and throw him into the alley. I'll fire three shots at him." But outside every door the ominous crowd stood.

The deputies finally rushed outside and threw their gas bombs at the men, women and children. Then one of the policemen, "all trembling, sweating, turned on me and fired. Though it was at close range, I jumped aside, the bullet landed imbedded in the face of their chief, the sheriff. He was holding me by the right arm. The sheriff let go of me, ran a bit, then fell face down into his eternal sleep." In the melee the miner had leaped out the door and escaped, "walking through deserts, day and night. I was worn out with fatigue, with heat and cold, hunger and thirst, but in my mind I carried the image of all my liberators."

Bob had taken careful notes throughout the recital and he pushed them aside. He took the man's hand, moved by his story and by his final words: "I am not here because I wish to be, Comrade Minor. I was advised to stay here until my people need me."

Bob drove hard across the desert roads to Sante Fe and met with others working on the case. He picked up David Levinson, the chief attorney for the defendants, a courageous lawyer from Philadelphia who had been sent by the I.L.D. In Gallup the two men went to the one-story building of the Gallup *Independent* to buy the newspapers published the day of the shootings. Bob introduced himself and Levinson to the editor who stared

up at him from under his thin-ribboned sombrero which he wore at his desk. "So you've come down to defend them, eh?" The editor was non-committal and the two strangers, newspapers under arm, left the office, the editor staring after them.

Bob was aware, of course, that danger stalked newcomers, "furriners" as they said in the Deep South. Eyes, like the editor's, would follow you, word would fly through town that friends of the miners were in town. And Reds, at that. That was the risk you took, the calculated risk. He believed the cause of these miners required his presence here, to obtain the facts, to get the lay of the land, and to set the forces for their defense into motion. There was no other way.You must show no fear, behave as though you had a God-given right to be here—"as we have," he said to Levinson. The two checked in at the local hotel where they were to meet a delegation of five sympathizers of the miners, Santa Fe folk, who had come to help.

At dinner time Bob and Levinson went downstairs into the lobby: the delegation had arrived. The wife of one of the defendants, Mrs. Julia Bartol, came to the hotel by pre-arrangement, and Bob stood in a corner of the lobby speaking with her, asking the names of possible witnesses for the defense, his eyes and ears alert for any possible eavesdroppers. Their chief protection, he felt, lay in their open and public appearance. After fifteen minutes in which Mrs. Bartol spoke rapidly, quietly, supplying him with information he needed, he felt that perhaps they were succeeding. But at that moment two hard-looking men passed nearby and halted to light cigarettes. Bob quietly suggested the group go outside and sit in a car to continue the conversation.

As Bob, Levinson and the miner's wife walked into the Plaza toward her car, Bob thought he detected the fast-moving figures of several men who dodged around the cars parked outside the hotel. Perhaps it was his imagination. He was uncertain and he doubted that the men, whoever they were, would try anything directly before the leading hotel in town. They sat in the car and Bob took notes as Mrs. Bartol replied to the questions he and the lawyer asked.

Half an hour later, as Bob glanced up from his notes, he saw a man run toward the car, a pistol in his hand pointed directly at him. Simultaneously two others, one on each side of the automobile, poked guns through the open windows. The

figures were covered with green hoods, holes cut for the eyes and the nostrils, a slit for the mouth. Others same running. The first man with the pistol reached for the handle of the car with his free hand. "Keep quiet," he whispered; the others said, "Get out, you sons-of-bitches."

His assailants threw him into the bottom of the car. He tried to memorize the interior of the automobile, was it a Chevrolet or a Ford? He could feel the car bumping across something like a dirt road. His head became cold and he reached up, felt thick blood, about a quarter of an inch deep under his hat. He realized then that he still held the fountain pen in his right hand, the envelope with names scribbled on it, in his left. He jammed the envelope up under his blood-soaked hat.

About forty-five minutes later the car stopped. The men lugged Bob out, and tossed him to the ground. Somebody pushed a sack tightly over his head, hat and all, and he felt them search his pockets carefully. They took his watch, keys, pocketbook, small change and every scrap of paper on his person, but, he exulted, they overlooked his hat under which he had thrust the envelope with the names. He detected the gleam of headlights through the pores of the sack, and the blaze of a fire the men lighted. He felt a stab of pain in his side, as one of the hooded men kicked him savagely. "We told you Reds to clear the hell out. Now stay out, don't ever come back." The men got into their automobiles and pulled away. As the surroundings grew black, he wondered what happened to Mrs. Bartol and Levinson. And suddenly the scrappy little lawyer stood over him, talking, helped him pull the sack from his head.

A cold drizzling rain began to fall, chilling him to the bone. "I think we're on the desert, Bob," the lawyer whispered and Bob peered into the darkness which was impenetrable. As a gray, wet day began to break it was clear that they had been dumped on the desert, the vast desolate plain was about them, the sky, bleak and cold. They were alone with the horizon.

Several times Bob staggered, fell to his knees, the blood still flowed from the wound in his head, dripping into his eyes. The two men stumbled on, silent, their breath coming in gasps now.

This was ghastly, Bob thought suddenly, his strength failing fast, the horizon beginning to spin. He was near exhaustion. He was afraid to sit down to rest, for if he went down he feared he would not be able to rise again. "We have to go on," he said,

and the two men lurched on. A few miles further and they came upon a stone hogan of the Navajos. Inside, they sank to the ground. It was dry at least. Outside a windstorm began to kick up, driving the rain in sheets and Bob was cold, colder than ever in his life. He felt in his pocket and discovered a folder of matches. He rose painfully and gathered a few sticks, the little lawyer from Philadelphia helping, and they built a bonfire.

Later that afternoon when the storm died down they went outside and began to walk again. There on the horizon, Levinson said, excited, he saw smoke. True enough. The men made for it and they came to the home of an Indian who stood watching them as they approached. When he saw Bob's face, dripping blood, he hurried inside and brought out a basin of water, daubed the blood away. "My name is Bene Tohe," the Indian, a Navajo, said, "wait here." He ran off and came back a few minutes later driving a small truck from the reservation on which he worked. He helped Bob and Levinson into the truck and sped across the flat land to the U.S. Government Indian Hospital, at Tehachi, New Mexico.

Bob suggested that Levinson telephone Governor Clyde Tingley for an armed escort. "We're going back to Gallup," he said. The lawyer phoned. Meanwhile, Bob wrote a brief news telegram in longhand to the *Daily Worker*. Mrs. Bartol had already notified the newspapers and the story of the kidnapping was abroad nationally. Half an hour later two State policemen, the Gallup sheriff, and an Associated Press reporter arrived. Bob entrusted the telegram to the reporter who sent it as part of his story which appeared in many newspapers as an A.P. dispatch.

Bob and Levinson were taken to the hospital at Gallup. As they lay on their cots, exhausted, their heads in bandages, Assistant District Attorney McIntosh arrived, a lean, saturnine man of fifty. He asked Bob for a statement and as Bob described the events the official laughed. "You're a god-damn liar and you know it." Bob tried to rise from the cot but a nurse restrained him. "I order you out of this room," Bob cried, "Get out." The official laughed again and walked out. He sent a story to the newspapers, which was reprinted nationally, that the kidnapping was a hoax, "a typical Communist trick."

Though he was still weak, Bob insisted, later that day, on returning to the Gallup hotel. The two men left the hospital for the hotel. And, as he had surmised, the national outcry

had prodded the local press, for within an hour a reporter from the Associated Press and from the Gallup *Independent* knocked on the door. They said they wanted to "verify" the story of the kidnapping, would Bob and Levinson help them re-trace their desert wanderings? The men agreed.

The newspapermen and an AP press photographer followed Bob's car to the desert—it was a Navajo reservation, northwest of Gallup. Two state policemen had been supplied by the Governor to accompany them. The Indian who had rescued them agreed to help.

The Navajo was astonishing as he retraced every step of their stumbling, groping trek the previous night. Bob marveled as the Indian crouched down at a jumble of rained-over dirt road and then looked up to tell the others where the two men had hesitated, or had stopped, conjecturing with eery accuracy what the men had said. "Little man stopped and didn't want to go. Big man walked fast; little man sat down. Big man turn back." He found clear footprints in dried mud which Bob pried up and brought as evidence.

Even the hostile Gallup *Independent* could not ignore so sensational a story. On May 6, it wrote, "Bronzed Bene Tohe, 44-year-old Navajo, Sunday morning had guided David Levinson . . . and Robert Minor . . . to the place where they were dumped out of cars by hooded vigilantes about midnight, May 2. . . ."

The evidence "corroborated the stories told by Levinson and Minor Saturday of a 13 hours' ordeal." The account silenced the District Attorney's office, the charge of hoax was refuted.

But the District Attorney, or rather, the Gallup-American Coal Company, was inexhaustible. For 72 hours the authorities had neglected to act, to investigate. Now after Bob and Levinson had returned with the evidence the Navajo Indian had helped them recover, the hotel suddenly filled with armed men who sent word up to Bob's room to turn the evidence over to them, or they would come up and take it by force. There was that stubborn streak in Bob that prevented him, in the face of extreme danger, from leaving the scene. It was more than personal courage: he had a responsibility, a Communist responsibility.

While the vigilantes waited below, he got out his old portable typewriter and wrote letters and wires to newspapers, to his party, to government officials, using the kidnapping as a lever

to pry up an understanding of Gallup, its terror, the truth of the miners. To congressman Maury Maverick, of Texas, he telegraphed: "I most urgently request you to force this issue into the light of day, to secure a federal investigation now instead of months later when more Tom Mooneys will have reached the death cell or perhaps have gone the way of Sacco and Vanzetti. If at the same time you can take steps to get a guard of federal men to prevent our second kidnapping or our assassination, I shall be glad, but if not, shall continue my work anyhow." His correspondence finished, Bob telephoned District Judge M. A. Otero in Santa Fe and persuaded him to agree to sign an itemized account of everything that had been found as proof of the crime on the desert. When he sent word downstairs to the armed men that this had been done, they disappeared. Bob and Levinson left Gallup that night for Santa Fe.

Bob wrote the I.L.D. to form a Gallup Defense Committee, for all the miners; this kidnapping would help its formation. The I.L.D. did magnificent work on this case; an entire nation came to know the strange name and the harsh truth of Gallup. Lydia wrote to all her friends, to many who were not friends but who could possibly be moved to some action. Typical of the response was that from William Pickens, field secretary of the NAACP, who knew Bob and Lydia from their work on the Scottsboro case. He ridiculed the "nonsense which the police and the robbers have been putting in the papers." They would have sensible people believe that Bob and Levinson "kidnapped themselves, beat themselves up in the desert." Of course, he said, he would be "glad to join the New York Gallup Defense Committee" and do what he could personally.

Bob worked tirelessly, in public, in private, speaking, organizing, writing, consulting, advising lawyers, helping to raise funds. Always he exhorted his comrades to put this case as it was, a trade union case, a matter of life and death for all unionists.

The worried prosecution pared the list of defendants to ten: at the trial the judge delivered a violent public attack on the defense. The police searched friends of the defendants as they came into the courtroom, strung electrically charged wires around the jail in Aztec where they held the defendants.

But the work of Bob and his associates had borne fruit: the jurors promptly acquitted six of the ten defendants; frightened

by the judge's animus, fearful for their own future, they compromised on the other four. Some on the jury remained steadfast and finally they agreed to acquit one of the four, compromised on second degree murder charges for the other three. They promptly expressed their doubt of the guilt of these three by recommending clemency. The judge's concept of clemency shocked them: he decreed prison terms of 45 to 60 years and concluded with the hope that "no future governor would ever pardon them." The United Mine Workers of the Rocky Mountain district took up their case, after the State Supreme Court, in 1937, set aside the conviction of one of the three. The other two served several years until the pressure of labor's protest freed them.

Throughout the months before the trial, Bob continued barnstorming the land on the case. Gallup, he cried, was no new or strange page in the history of American labor. Frame-up is the employers' weapon. Violence is the weapon of the employer, and stool pigeons, informers, their paid agents to defame and to convict. He related Gallup to Haymarket, in 1887, Moyer-Haywood-Pettibone in 1906, Mooney and Billings, Sacco and Vanzetti, Angelo Herndon, Scottsboro. What he, his party, had to say taught millions of American workingmen and many in other classes the facts of industrial life. There is no question that such lessons helped to found the CIO, to swell the ranks of the AFL. And later, to persuade the New Deal Congress to pass the Wagner Act with all that meant for the working class.

It was inevitable that men like John L. Lewis would say, at the convention of the AFL in October of that year, 1935: "There are great influences abroad in the land and the minds of men in all walks of life are disturbed." Forces are at work "that would wipe out, if they could, the labor movement of America, just as it was wiped out in Germany, or just as it was wiped out in Italy." The answer, he said, was "a more comprehensive and more powerful labor movement." It was at this convention that the basis for the CIO was laid.

Journey to Goya

THE ATLANTIC wind that afternoon of December 17, 1936, roared down the bleak canyons of Wall Street. A few blocks away, on West Street, at Pier 17, Bob and Lydia stood watching the crew ready the Queen Mary for departure. Bob turned from his wife an instant to point at the sea empress and her magnificent lines, the big funnels slanted, the deck higher, he remembered, than the highest building in his native San Antonio when he had left home. They asid their goodbyes, his the over-hearty assurances of a man going to war.

Lydia insisted on coming to the dock with him despite a stubborn illness which persisted more than a year, an ailment that brought a constant fever. She stood, tall, lovely, muffled in her bright orange scarf, her eyes veiled yet glistening, her cheeks flushed red by the biting wind and by her illness. Bob looked at her a long time and said in an effort at gaiety that she was the only woman he knew who was more beautiful than a ship.

Yes, she thought, it would carry him off to a war, a strange war, in far-off Spain. Would it carry him back? Well, he must go, that was the kind of a man he was and that was the kind of a movement he, and she, believed in.

On the way down from the shingled home on the hill she had thought, looking out at the Hudson's placid water, of all the dangers he had survived in the fourteen years they were man and wife. There was still the small red crescent of a scar on that dear bald head from the pistol butts of the Gallup vigilantes. Not for an instant could she allow the notion that her man of war wouldn't come back; no, he would have laughed, he had too much work to do. After the last embrace he was up the gangplank in his long strides, waving at her from the ship's

railing, his gray cap pulled low against the ocean winds. He seemed so far-off already. The gangplank went up and the ship was out in the harbor.

And now Spain, Lydia mused as she stood watching the ship after she could no longer see the man. Now history had crossed the Pyrenees into that strange, sun-struck land of Cervantes and Goya and Velasquez; the nation of grandees and conquistadores was now the home of the *Frente Popular,* the People's Front, humanity's new and embattled banner.

How often she heard Bob speak of Spain since that day of July, the 18th wasn't it, when he came home edgy and excited and though he rarely swore, he cursed that day, cursed the mangy little cur with the paunch who had secretly summoned his armies to destroy the government that had so much hope for the future of Spain, and, as she had heard Bob explain, at big meetings and to anybody anywhere who would listen, of enormous importance to the world, to us across the sea. If Franco wins, we were witnessing the first battle of the Second World War.

Bob spoke so earnestly of Spain, there was something so infectious in his ardor, that Lydia walked across the room, and kissed his forehead. She stood off and looked at him; he seemed suddenly like the tall, sun-tanned boy who walked the Texas plains, who loved, as Routez had told her, to ride the wild horses during the lightnings and thunders of a prairie storm.

And one day, early in December, he came home, swept her into his arms saying he was to go to Spain as the war correspondent for the *Daily Worker* and other labor newspapers and progressive magazines. If only she could go with him, his cup would be full. Maybe she would if she nursed her health and after he had gone and got the lay of the land, ascertained if the presence of a correspondent's wife would not be regarded askance by a people that had little to carry on a war. She could write and she could draw, do useful work there herself. But first her health, and, he thought, holding his counsel, it might be wiser for her to stay out of the land where the bombs fell every day and night. He would see. In any event, he said aloud, he would be back in a few months to speak at meetings across the land to summon aid for the Spanish Republic. But first he must go and see for himself, and afterward, perhaps, they would return to Spain together.

He came down from Paris by Air France, over the magnificent peaks of the Pyrenees and landed at Valencia, then the capital of Republican Spain. Here Africa and Europe seemed to merge, he thought. "Were all the beauties of Spain at climax here?" he wrote Lydia after he had walked the streets lined with lovely buildings, some white, some tan, others a delicate blue, decorated with the gleaming tile of the Moorish architecture and he noted how the avenues were lined with orange trees for shade, the fruit left on the branches for ornaments, neat and clean streets filled with high two-wheeled carts drawn by two mules, headed by little obstinate burros. His heart reveled as he looked into the swarthy, bright faces of the people so many of whom raised their right fists in the Popular Front salute murmuring *"Salud."* They seemed to him the most beautiful of all the world's inhabitants.

Carlos Contreras was awaiting him at his hotel. Contreras, a barrel-chested man with laughing insolent eyes flung his arms around Bob whom he had known in the States. An immigrant from Trieste, Carlos had worked at Ford's in Detroit before he was deported by our government. He made his way to Spain and Bob learned that this deportee, this Ford worker, was the famous and beloved *Comandante Carlos* who was already revered in song, one of the organizers of the indomitable Fifth Regiment of Madrid that inspired all other Madrileños to hold the Moors at the Manzanares, frustrating Franco's plan to enter Madrid the previous November 7.

"Come, Roberto," Carlos said gaily, "you must come with me to Madrid, the center of the world." That night they drove over the higher land, the trees surrendering to rolling empty prairies and to hills, stark and bare, like those of his own Texas, all of which gave him "the illusion of being back home."

The two men approached Madrid near dawn and as they came across the plain lit by that Castilian moon which seems to glow more silvery, brighter than any other moon in the world, Carlos turned to Bob, as Bob wrote in a dispatch and said: "And you know where we are? Here Cervantes lived and pictured the heart and soul of Spain. See the fields here? The little stone houses and those rock walls? They probably were here when Cervantes described the old don riding Rosinante over the same road. Bob, if you don't read Cervantes, you cannot understand Spain." Some people think that Don Quixote was the embodi-

ment of old Spain. No. "But Don Quixote is not Spain, it is Don Quixote and Sancho Panza together." Later Carlos gave Bob Cervantes' book in Spanish, inscribed to "Don Quixote (and Sancho Panza)" which I found Bob reading for the fifth time when I came to Spain some months later.

As they entered the city terrible explosions shook the stately buildings: artillery shells fired by Franco cannon, or rather, German cannon, from the electrified batteries at Mount Garabitas. The shells landed in the heart of the capital, in its densest communities where the workers lived, crashing through the walls of the homes where men and women and children slept. "Thus," Bob wrote, "I heard Franco salute the dawn of the New Year of 1937."

Madrid, city of the sun. Bob walked its streets the next morning, Contreras bouncing along at his side. Carlos pointed out the buildings in the Puerto del Sol, in the Gran Via, the imposing Telefonica, the city's sole skyscraper that was a chief target for the battery on Mount Garabitas.

Later, at the headquarters of the Communist Party, Bob met La Pasionaria, Dolores Ibarruri. She was all that he had expected, a woman of magnificent bearing, beautiful of countenance, her coal-black eyes aglow, her shining black hair combed back over a pure high forehead. A Communist leader, the daughter of Asturian miners, her husband killed in a mine explosion, she had become a national heroine during the resistance at Madrid before November 7. Her cry, "Better die on our feet than live on our knees," had become known in all lands. She took Bob's hands in both of hers: "*Camarada,*" she said, "*camarada* from America. Welcome to Republican Spain." She said she knew Bob and had read his work. José Diaz, "Pepe," as the Communists called him, a short, lean, wiry man with a sharp penetrating glance, the head of the party, embraced Bob, flung his arms around him and thumped his back. Yes, they all knew him, and Bob felt, as he wrote, that here too was home. Few in the world know the pull, the tug, of human fraternity, the brotherhood of many nations, like the Communists know it and to whom it is a principal tenet by which they live and die.

He set to work at once for he was already feverishly impatient to begin cabling daily dispatches that would describe the life that insisted on flourishing, even under the bombs.

He prowled, keen-eyed, through the streets of Madrid, to Cuatro Caminos, to Carabanchel, to University City, everywhere, peering at everything under his heavy eyebrows. His eyes sparkled at the vision of the trim, spruce Madrileños who walked so blithely on the sidewalks over which death hovered, marveling at the tenacity of life which seemed to laugh at all that would destroy it. He watched the children prancing off to school in the morning, the mothers who saw them off and then went out to buy the sparse groceries, *garbanzos, bacalo*—beans and dried codfish—and *pan,* bread; and the young men jaunty, in their brisk, gesticulating way, home from the front to snatch an hour of life with their kin.

Bob halted at the queues outside the bootblack shops and saw these soldiers, veterans already, many of them, stop to get the mud of trenches at University City or Carabanchel brushed from their footwear, halting, before they went home to get a high shine on the new army shoes, those who had received the skimpy issue. Many, he saw, were still in tennis shoes, or *alpargatos,* the home-made sandals, and their clothes, or what passed for uniforms, were nondescript, thin, pathetic protection against the biting cold of the Castilian winter. Always, he saw, their faces were clean shaven, the barber shops were crowded. An aura of human dignity shone from them, revealing itself in the care they took of their person, their carefully-combed hair, their blacked boots, earmarks of the worth with which they regarded themselves, and hence, he felt, their nation.

He went down to the trenches at University City often, whenever he could and he mused over the miracle he saw, peeping through the periscopes at the parapets. It was as though the enemy were encamped, say, on half the campus of Columbia University, and you took the IRT subway up from Grand Central or Fourteenth Street to go to war.

Everything he saw he translated into American, for that he felt was his task, to make clear to his folk across the sea the life he saw, remind them that all this had happened to their grandfathers, to our nation, in 1861.

He trudged through the maze of trenches, assessing their design, the barbed wire entanglements, and he stopped to talk with the men. An artillery duel began and he listened to the whine of the shells, their crash that seemed to swell and fill the bright gold air, and he thought he saw a curious shimmer

of light that might mark the progress of a shell in midair.

His first story from Madrid began with this sentence: "Madrid is the center of the world and everybody knows it." He tackled that question which, first of all questions, had to be clear to the millions back home: the nature of this war. It was *not* a war of fascism against Communism, it was a war against democracy. "Here the fascist forces, on an international scale, and of all nations where fascism exists, are staking their claim for the conquest of Europe." In a straightforward prose, precise, factual, image-filled and above all, impassioned he said here is the place of decision, here we shall learn "whether we shall have an immediate Second World War." Spain was staked out by the Third Reich as an essential foothold for the military conquest of West European democracy.

How best to tell the story, in terms all Americans would understand, in terms of their own experience? Well, look at it this way: many of you remember, Bob cabled, the words of the Rev. Father Charles Coughlin who said a few months before the 1936 elections that if "we" could not defeat the Communists with ballots "we must defeat them with bullets." And remember that at the same time Coughlin said Roosevelt was "communistic," would establish a "Bolshevik Government" in Washington. "What," Bob asked, "if the American election had been a little closer?" And if Wiliam Randolph Hearst had a "little stronger hold upon the debauched section of the population and a little firmer organization of that string of army and navy officers of the National Guard which he maintains in the 'stables' of the Hearst press?" And what then, if a whole aggregation of these politically corrupt elements had made a wild military drive to upset the American elections after last November 3? He reminded his readers of General Smedley D. Butler's sworn testimony that a similar plan was actually underway a few years past and that the general was offered unlimited funds to head 100,000 American legionnaires on a march on Washington to change the American government into a dictatorship. What if the financiers of that project, or Hearst and the du Ponts had driven the plan through that Coughlin had conceived? "Well—that is just what happened in Spain." The analogy is not precise because the struggle of Spain against the Spanish Hearsts and du Ponts was led by "a vast People's Front much more popular and democratic in character than Mr. Jim

Farley's campaign could boast." But in all essentials "that is what happened and is happening in Spain."

He explained, as simply as he knew: Spain, like the U.S.A., was faced with a profoundly important election, in January 1936. An aggregation of reaction and fascism was financed by a cabal of moneyed men headed by Juan March. They negotiated with the fascists of Germany and Italy. Secretly.

The trade unions, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, the liberal democratic parties including a substantial portion of the Spanish middle capitalist class, found themselves menaced by a common danger: fascist dictatorship. They formed a united front and overwhelmingly they defeated the candidates of reaction in the February 1936 elections. The grandees, defeated at the polls, took arms to forcibly overthrow the ballot—precisely as Father Coughlin suggested in the United States.

And were it not for the massive intervention of Nazi Germans and Mussolini Italians, Franco, by now, would have been crushed.

The governments of only two countries in all the world were helping beleagured Spain: that of the Soviet Union, which was sending arms, munitions, and a handful of technicians, and Mexico, under President Cardenas, eagerly willing but woefully poor. And no other government, although millions of the citizens of France, Britain, the United States, and of virtually every other land in the world favored the victory of Republican Spain, expressing their support as best they could, some by mustering up medical aid, sending ambulances, doctors, nurses, delegations of writers, trade unionists, public figures.

The world's moral support heartened the men and women who were fighting virtually bare-handed but arms, arms, which the Republic needed most desperately. The Soviet cargoes came, if they arrived, through gauntlets of ships and planes, around a continent, braving the aerial bombs and marine torpedoes of Hitler and Mussolini. The Soviet tanker, the *Komsomol,* was sunk off Gibraltar. So, Bob instantly saw, the people of Spain must, at least for the time and who knows how much longer, carry on alone on the long, tortuous battlefronts in the mountains and plains. They must hold out, resist, until the common people of the world changed the balance of forces, for their Governments, blind to the national interest, corrupted by their upper-class bias, would not change their policies volun-

tarily. *Could* the Spanish people hold out? It was almost superhuman of them to do so, yet a people can accomplish miracles even as they are being drowned in their blood. It was to the Axis interest to convince the world the Republic could not survive: the Burgos radio said every day, hour by hour, that the Republic of the *"rojos,"* the Reds, was done, finished. Bob's job, he held, every anti-fascist writer's job, was to illustrate to the world that the Republic could hold out until aid came. Aid? For God's sake, America, sell the legally constituted government of Spain the arms it wanted to buy! That was international law and that could make the difference.

Bob's dispatches traced the basis for the epic courage, the passionate resistance, of the Spanish people. To do so, he told, in detail, the story of Madrid. He talked to hundreds of Madrileños and Madrileñas, of all parties, young and old, who had shared in its defense, bare-handed, who went out into the streets, learned to fire a musket from the levies that they had taken from the arsenals in the fascist uprising of July 18 and 19. They had fought in their civilian clothes, with no knowledge of military art, and later, they knocked together the semblance of battalions, drilled awkwardly, disdaining the disciplines of military tradition, and they had streamed to the fronts. The Popular Front government had no centralized military command. Most professional officers had joined Franco. You had to start at scratch to organize an army. Conscription did not exist: everyone was a volunteer. Men who fought heroically one day would, too often, go home the next. The need for discipline, understanding, organization, was imperative. Most battalions felt their primary allegiance, on the field, was to their party, or their trade unions, which were their sole organizing centers. Then, as Bob got the picture, a magnificent social panorama unfolded.

The potential of the Popular Front Government was magnificent, this coalition of all parties that opposed fascism, but it lacked cohesion, unity, in the rear-guard as well as at the front. It was holding, resisting, by dint of the people's profound patriotism and voluntary sacrifice.

The International Brigades that were forming—heroic and understanding as their members were—could never become more than an inspiring token of the world's esteem for democratic Spain. Imperative, Bob learned, was the need for a unified army

THE EVOLUTION OF THE AMERICAN PEASANT

and general staff, beholden to the Popular Front Government. And this the Spanish Communists assayed. Their party became the first protagonist of a unified army command responsible to the Popular Front Government and to it alone.

The Communists selected a regiment of the army as a point of primary concentration: the fifth, the famous "El Quinto." The party encouraged its people, its best, to volunteer for service in that regiment. A number of its political leaders were chosen as political commissars.

The nerve-wracking confusion in the improvised trenches began to disappear. As a young major told Bob at University City, "We found moments to improve the trenches." The old straight-line trenches were changed to zig-zag trenches to prevent enfilading fire. "Soldiers began to receive ammunition that fitted the bore of rifles, enough bayonets began to come to go around. And let me tell you, *camarada,* that is no small matter. Soldiers don't feel rgiht iwthout bayonets," the major smiled grimly. He recalled his own first days as a soldier. "You sit in the trenches under artillery barrage, waiting and thinking about the bayonet and hand-grenade charges which will soon come from the half-drunk foreign legionnaires, reckless with alcohol. You see them come at you with long, glistening bayonets, plus pistols, plus hand grenades, and in your mind you go through all your own motions when you will rise to meet the charge. But you have no bayonet at the end of your gun, you have at best a few rounds of ammunition, and no pistol, and no hand grenades. A half-dozen times you have taken out all the rifle cartridges and examined each to make sure you won't jam your gun with a wrong-sized cartridge. *Camarada,* you don't feel good while you are waiting for them to arrive. The bayonet is helpful to morale." The major said he was not a Communist then. He had no party, was a trade unionist, solely, a member of the UGT—the General Workers Union. "But I began to look around; I have eyes." The Communist Party members in the Fifth made all these things their business. "We began to get bayonets. The food supply became a system. You used to get nothing but sardines for a week, then you'd starve for three days, then perhaps get a nice big consignment of salt and pepper for the next week. Soon the Fifth Regiment began to make the best of its food supply, gave a good proportion of bread and meat," and his eyes

laughing as he looked at Bob, "we even began to get a little good red *vino*. It did not hurt."

Yes, the Communists made the difference, inspired organization and discipline. "So I became a Communist. Everybody was fighting better, we even had some successes. We began to get steel helmets, a few at first that we captured from the Foreign Legion." Many of the Republicans scorned the steel helmets, complained at first, that they were "too heavy," they gave you a headache. "We got almost as many head-wounds as we had casualties and that proved the need for steel helmets, and such of the Fifth Regiment as could get them began to wear them every day, beginning with the *comandantes*."

Explanation, as Bob knew, was the army's life-blood. Understanding. Without that, victory was impossible. Trucks bearing literature began to appear at the front; newspapers, pamphlets, simple and vivid, were prepared at the headquarters of the Fifth Regiment. In seven weeks the 2,000 the Communists had called for grew to 70,000. The Fifth became so famous that all the volunteers wanted to join it, it and none other. So many flocked to its standards that it had to be divided into a number of regiments, but the recruits insisted that each be called the Fifth.

The Communist Party instantly offered all its soldiers to the Popular Front government. It proposed a single, unified army under a single, unified command. The other parties were obliged to emulate its example. So a single, unified army was created. So the Resistance strengthened, so the army of a nation, rather than the assembly of legions of many parties, grew. Successes on the field inspired the rear guard. Here, too, Bob's articles showed, the Communists devoted their energy, thought, courage, and the organization of the factories, and the men in them, improved. Production increased.

And similarly in the countryside, for Spain was, essentially, an agrarian land. When the anarchists shut the churches down, the Communists saw that as a dangerous act of division, menacing the unity resistance required. You had the irony of that party which was dubbed "the godless ones," sending a delegation to a Catholic member of the Cabinet asking that the churches be reopened. The official refused, at first, fearing the resentment of the anarchists, whose strength among the industrial workers and

in the countryside could not easily be ignored. The ideas of Bakunin had long taken root in the thorny soil of the peninsula where the industrial working class was still relatively small and the principles of scientific Marxism had much to overcome. But the Communist case was so strong, so evident, that the churches were opened soon afterward.

All these facts were in Bob's dispatches to the *Daily Worker,* and always, he concluded, with the imperative of the time, the cry for Washington to lift the embargo so that the Spanish Republic would not perish under the torrent of steel. He wrote his stories as though he were possessed, posing these questions, answering them, calling always for help from the American government—help that never came.

But if the American government did not send help, the American people did.

A Wreath for Volunteers

A CONTINGENT of volunteers from America, the first, was making its way to Spain. Less than a fortnight after Bob left, twenty-six young men took ship from New York, in the dead of night, on Christmas eve. They were somewhere in Spain by now. Several hundreds more were coming, or had arrived. By the middle of February of 1937 some three hundred Americans, obliged to travel secretly, were here. Many had scaled the Pyrenees, outwitting the French border guard that would have interned them. Volunteers were headed for Spain from some twenty-six countries of the globe, the best sons of their nations, the staunchest democrats who realized that if fascism conquered here their countries would be next. They were trade unionists in the main, and many came from the universities: Hans Beimler, the gifted German had already died in the defense of Madrid. Fascist bullets took the lives of many like Ralph Fox, the brilliant British writer. They came, a step ahead of the pursuing constables, like Lafayette, vo nSteuben, Kosciuzko, who had crossed the Atlantic to stand at Washington's side in 1776.

Bob was nervously impatient to get to the place where the Americans were training. As soon as he was able to get a *salvoconducto,* a pass, he was off, jubilantly, to find his countrymen. They had reported at the ancient town of Albacete, in La Mancha, Don Quixote's home province, the headquarters of the International Brigades; then they went to Villanueva de la Jara where they remained until February 18. Bob drove steadily, almost recklessly, through mountain passes, down abrupt slopes, in a fever to be with them. Some, he conjectured, he would recognize, doubtless his "sons." They were going through

the paces, learning to become men of war. He did not realize how paltry the preparations were to make warriors of civilians, but he knew that ammunition, food, leadership, would be scarce. He knew too, nearly everybody in Madrid seemed to know, the lines were so close you could almost hear the enemy breathe across No Man's Land, that Franco's armies were preparing a conclusive assault on Madrid, pushing to cut the road to Valencia, the life-line to the sea, the Mediterranean, and to surround the capital completely. If this offensive succeeded, it would mean the quick strangulation of the republic.

The Fifteenth Brigade, to which most of the Americans were consigned, held the most important sectors at San Martin de la Vega and Morata de Tajuna, where the heaviest attacks were expected. Forty-eight hours before these decisive battles Bob arrived at a village near the front, in the pitchy night. His guide directed him to a great, grim monastery which, in the gloom, loomed like a mountain. Its walls were as thick as a fortress. Inside, in the pale light of tall candles, he made out the figures of some hundred boys, Americans. They sat on great long benches and he could see their faces, truly a painting out of Goya. The flickering light threw a yellowish beam into the black void of the tower overhead and into the chancels.

Icy cold it was, and when he came nearer the men he saw that their faces were pinched, blue, and he thought some were shivering. He discovered that they were hungry. Fifteen of the contingent here were down with the grippe. His heart pounded as he looked at their eager faces turned toward him: the faces of youth, here was one that was probably of Irish descent, there he saw the dark, lean face of a Jew, and he thrilled at the brown faces of Negroes. Americans. He felt the palpable, almost tactile, quality of a great moment in history. Something stirred in him as it had when he walked the streets of Moscow, back in 1918, or Berlin during the Christmas fighting when he saw Karl Liebknecht for the last time.

The commander was Robert Merriman, a lean six-footer with the visage of a scholar, his long face framed in horn-rimmed spectacles, a slight stoop to his shoulders. Merriman was, Bob learned, an instructor in economics at the University of Nevada. But his frame was strong, he had played varsity football as an undergraduate there, his handshake was hard. There was something winning in his shy smile as he told Bob

he had known his writings, knew them a long time. Bob, enormously pleased, began to ask his questions: How were the men? Did they have arms? Ammunition? Food? Shoes? A hundred questions.

Matters were not good, that he knew, but he was startled to learn how bad they really were. The hundred men had twelve rifles and one bayonet. They had trained without firing a single shot. Food was not good, shelter was poor, everything was haphazard, and they were to be called into action soon, any hour now. "And yet," Merriman said simply, "they're ready." As Bob turned toward the men he sensed their electric zest. "Bob Minor's here," a buzz went around. "Fighting Bob," a slim, black-eyed Brooklyner said, standing off, eyeing him, a wide grin on his face. "I voted for the first time in my life when you ran for Mayor in 1933 and I voted for you," the lad said. Bob passed around the hall, pumping the boys' hands, a great grin on his face to avoid the tears that he felt.

There was a babble of questions. "What's happening in auto," a stocky man of thirty-five called out and Bob saw a union button on his overseas cap. "How about maritime?" another shouted. They plied him with a thousand eager questions, of labor, of politics, of the New Deal, innumerable questions on the international scene, of Chamberlain, Blum, Hitler, Mussolini, the Non-Intervention Committee. Bob answered these questions, and many more: the Americans were loathe to see him go.

In Madrid, two days later, one of the men of the Brigade, up on a hurried mission, brought him up-to-date. The men, the morning after he was there, received their first arms, packed in grease; they scarcely had time to wipe the grease from their precious rifles when orders came to move up, for battle. The encirclement of Madrid had begun. "That night, we practiced our rifles and machine guns, fired five shots each into the mud-banks, and we moved into the trenches under fire."

The men held, the Fifteenth did a "good job," as they said laconically of feats that required the greatest valor: Madrid was not encircled.

The Fifteenth held the first-line trenches under fire for 109 days, from February 12 to May 31, within sixty to eighty yards from the fascist trenches. This was the time of Jarama. By the time the men came out of the lines almost five hundred had been in battle, had gone over the top: 127 were killed, nearly 200 were

wounded. Franco learned a lesson: he could not crack through the Jarama front. To the end of the war the fascists failed to dent that line, to cut the Madrid-Valencia highway which would complete the encirclement of Madrid.

James W. Ford, the Negro leader who had joined the party while Bob lived in Chicago, one of his "sons," came to Spain to bring the troops greetings from America. Ford had twice been the party's vice-presidential candidate. Together they spoke from the government short-wave radio in Valencia that beamed the story of the Republic to the world. "Jim and I," Bob wrote Lydia, "went to see our boys at Jarama and the reception we got was splendid. There, with the bullets flying, good comrades rushed up, yelling, cheering Jim and me while the proper authorities warned all heads to keep low. The spirit of these men is superb, under all difficulties. The American boys have made such a splendid record in combat, have placed a wreath on America's head." Everyone was full of praise for *los Americanos*. Bob spoke of the pride Jim and he felt when they talked with the Negro soldiers in the Brigade, the many splendid soldiers like Oliver Law, killed in the attacg on Villanueva de la Canada, and Milton Herndon, who was to die in the Aragon offensive later, while leading his machine-gun detail into the open terrain at Fuentes del Ebro. And Bob noted the joy with which the Negroes, and the whites, welcomed Ford. And as it was among the Internationals, so it was with the Spanish troops. "Nowhere in the world has the bestiality of racism," Bob commented, "been so routed as it has in the trenches of Republican Spain."

His letters continued, invariably cheerful, optimistic, and Lydia was hard put to it to read between the lines to discover how he was, really. He had lost nineteen pounds in the twelve weeks he was away. Was he really in the pink, as he insisted? He never mentioned his own hardships—or his own dangers. "I feel better here," a characteristic letter said, "than I have ever felt. I love this beautiful and strong-hearted Spain and I am glad I am here." But she could surmise from the past that he stood where the danger was greatest. She determined, as soon as her health allowed, to go and be at his side.

Her determination would have doubled had she known of his day when he wrote his letter telling of Ford's visit and re-

ception. He had stood on the porch of the Communist Party headquarters in Barcelona, watching an Italian squadron bomb the city. He wrote a dispatch and walked to the cable office to send it, then returned home through the darkened streets. Near his house he felt slivers of window-glass crunch under his feet: a bomb had fallen nearby. He stumbled into the crater, nine feet deep, the bomb had left; he scrambled out, shins bruised, battered, but not much the worse for it. The crater was directly before his house and as he walked up the stairs he saw the landlady sleeping calmly on her bed, her door torn from its hinges. Well, this was the way of life in Spain and you lived it as the people lived it.

Every day challenged him, in big ways and little. It was no easy matter to plumb the depths of this war to find the facts for his cables, to gather all the pertinent details, to describe and analyze the government change in May, for example, when a more determined set of cabinet ministers replaced Premier Caballero.

Some other of Bob's duties were infinitely exacting in other ways, small perhaps by contrast, but necessary, he felt, like insisting that the packages sent from home to the American volunteers, cigarettes, letters, food parcels, be brought them come hell or high water. Though Bob was a war correspondent, it was his nature to assume duties far beyond those formally his. It would have been impossible for him to be in Spain without knowing, in tiniest detail, what the men needed, wanted, and he exerted every influence to get them what they wanted. He made his trips to the front to gather information for his cables, true. But no trip passed, and he made hundreds, without a speech to the men on the world political scene, the general stream of political and economic and military life of Spain. It was not enough to dispense information to America, he must bring enlightenment to the soldiers who wanted so desperately to know, in the mud of their trenches, what was happening in the world beyond their parapets. He prepared his talks meticulously so that he could answer their questions. For this was a citizen army, a volunteer army, the quest for truth and for justice had brought them here. They fought because they understood: and their appetite for knowledge was insatiable. Hence it was his duty, his obligation, to help satisfy that appetite.

So the days rolled on, in the smoke of battle, the clang of

production, the fervor of debate and Bob ranged the land, the fronts. Thousands of good men died on the battlelines, many of the young Americans Bob knew and to whom he had talked. They were dying as the summer waned, the orange trees turning from a deep green to a pale green to yellow. Bob noted nature's changes in his letter and then remarked, "And work, work, with thousands of men, the pick of the party and its sympathizers and the 'not ours'—thoroughly trusted by these magnificent men, working with them and for them—the greatest privilege life has given me."

Death came often, "an expected guest, calmly received, and we go on and live and fight and avenge our dead, not because we waste our passions on vengeance, but because killing fascists is the way to stop the killing of the best youth of the world."

But he could never maintain the grim, the sombre note long: it was his characteristic to see the living, the growing, "If I speak of these things it does not mean there is nothing else to see and to feel. Streets full of people and movies and laughs and happy talking. . . ." In the midst of the war, the bombings and the dying, Bob found time to snatch an hour almost every day to study at the Berlitz school to improve his Spanish. "Took one lesson yesterday and will have another today," a letter says.

Bob was still in Valencia when I arrived, in late July; I came as correspondent for the *Worker* and the *New Masses* which I was then editing. I was in the city no more than four hours or so when a siren began to blow in a wail that chilled the blood. It began far down in the scale and ascended to an ear splitting climax and fell again. I made my way across the streets to the Hotel Ingles, where Bob lodged. The all-clear had not sounded as I came to the hotel, and there I saw his tall, spare figure on the curbstone. He was even thinner than I had seen him last. Under his beret he looked like the monument of an ancient Spanish patriarch. What a job Velasquez or Greco or Goya could have done on him! Strong-nosed, lean-chinned, his bearing bold and proud, he stood scanning the sky profaned by the planes, so absorbed that he did not detect my presence at his side until I touched his elbow and he turned. His eyes lit up and he threw his arms around me in the Spanish embrace. Thne jutting his chin upward toward the sky he said, "Capronis, probably from Majorca. The fourth time in two days." The

Franco high command was furious over the victory the Republicans had just won in the Aragon mountains.

"You come at the right time," he exclaimed jubilantly. The Fifteenth Brigade, the Lincolns, had just taken Quinto and Belchite, key towns, near Saragossa, Franco's capital in the Aragon. But the losses were heavy, he said, his voice dropping. He was about to visit the front to find the men. Among the wounded was Steve Nelson, and his report had it that Steve's wound might be fatal. I had met Steve, a veteran organizer in the anthracite coal fields who was now a lieutenant colonel of the Internationals, whose qualities as a soldier were already legendary.

Within hours we were in the highlands, driving hard, passing through great silent orange groves and long green stretches of somber pine. Once, high on a mountain crest, Bob motioned toward the scene below: a tawny valley dotted by six scattered villages, a thread of roadway between them, and there, high on some overhanging rocks, some Spaniard had climbed, paint bucket in hand, risking his neck to splash in great red letters, *"Viva la Republica."* Cervantes' "silent villages" had found their voice.

Between long silences he launched into lectures on the war as though I were an audience of thousands. Nearly deaf, he did not know that his voice boomed through the valley and into the pine trees as he talked of the Popular Front government and the responsibility of American Communists in this epic war. At three in the dark, foggy morning of the Aragon badlands, high in the mountains, he said we were living through one of history's greatest moments and it was an inestimable privilege to be here. "I know you know this," he said suddenly, as though he had said something that was self-evident, "but it can always bear repetition." America's destiny was intertwined with all that was happening in this old valiant land. "Quiepo de Llano, that drunken sonofabitch,' he roared, "says over the Burgos radio that the Popular Front government is Communist. That's to scare babies and the Western governments." The Loyalist government, he said, was a coalition of all anti-fascist parties and the Communists were the most loyal of all under it, subordinating everything for the victory of the People's Front. That, he said, must permeate everything that I will write.

We found the Lincolns as the first faint pink streaks of

dawn crept over the mountains to the east. They were encamped in an olive grove near a big stone barn that was within earshot of Belchite. We heard the guns across the hill and saw the flashes of fire that lit the dark redly. A sentry led us to the battalion headquarters which was in a great water pipe that had dried up. A big flat rock served as the desk, a lantern dimly lit the interior, a strange GHQ indeed. Bob leaped forward to embrace Dave Doran, an officer of the battalion, an erect, bright-eyed figure, a captain's insignia on his cap. I first met Dave in Pittsburgh some five years before and I seemed to remember the down of young manhood on his round face, the dark glow of his eyes and his boyish air then. Now he stood in his olive-colored uniform, a great revolver hung from his belt and shook hands warmly, yet soberly, a new mature air about him, the deliberate manner of a man of war. Bob hugged him like a father would a son who had come through battle alive.

I can never forget Bob's face as we passed among the wounded and the dying who lay on the earth in the great stone barn, the blood of their wounds soaking the blankets and the straw. Bob took their hands, murmuring to them but I saw the shadow in his eyes. So, I thought afterward, Walt Whitman must have felt as he passed among the wounded in the hospitals of Washington during the Civil War, his great heart stabbed as he stood among his countrymen, the boys from the farms and from the cities, the amputees and the shattered whose blood had been spilled for their country.

When we came to Steve Nelson who lay at the far end of the barn, beneath a shattered window, Bob bent low and kissed him. The miner smiled up at him, denying that he was gravely wounded. Bob ran to the medicos who corroborated Steve's contention, and Bob returned to Steve's side. I could see that Bob loved this man as he would his brother. He insisted that as soon as Steve was able to sit up he would drive him to Valencia for treatment and to hasten the recovery.

In this Bob had the passionate concurrence of all the men, those who had come through battle unscathed and those who lay wounded, for the men had cried during the fighting, "Don't let them get Steve!" His record had endeared him to the troops as no other: he was the epitome of the people's commander, ministered to them day and night and they knew it. He had

defied all dangers to bring them the food, the ammo, the mail, the cigarettes, had risked his life time and again for them. His runner, a slim, boyish lad of 19 by the name of Harry Fisher told us that night as we sat on the rocks how Steve, during Brunete, before action, had taken him over the top into No Man's Land in the dark of night, to study the terrain. "Dawn was coming up already and we were on top of the enemy lines. I was scared to death some twig would snap and the bullets would start flying. We were sitting ducks." Steve had insisted on completing his reconnoiter, jotting notes down on his pad, and then had crawled back to the lines. No, the runner said, Steve never asked anyone to take any chance he wouldn't take first. Others told similar stories and Bob's eyes glowed as he listened to these tales of hard fighting men who were on such familiar terms with death that they spoke of it without sentiment, monosyllabic, but a different note had crept into their voices as they talked of Steve.

I accompanied the two men back to Valencia, and during the long ride over the mountains considered them: Steve, in his early thirties, a plain workingman in appearance, his homely face lit up by the blue of a pair of sharp eyes that could in a glance divine a man's mood, his thought. His face, severe in repose, had the quality of instant illumination at an idea or a scene or a situation, the spark revealing the quick intelligence behind the eyes. Bob, a score of years older, had a similar quality. The kinship between them was apparent. Both had been through the mill: both were exemplars of the best in the Communist tradition; both would walk into the valley of death, uncomplaining, if that would advance the lot of mankind. One had the blood of our nation's founders in his veins; the other was an immigrant; the same blood.

Several weeks later Steve had recovered sufficiently to be able to accompany Bob on a trip back to the Aragon front. The troops had shifted from Quinto to Codo. En route, a swarm of planes appeared suddenly and the bombs began to drop. The chauffeur halted the car, jumped out and plunged beneath it. Bob, Steve told me afterward, "bent his head a little, and just sat there." Part of the mudguard was sheared off as though a welder had worked on it. Bob climbed out and examined it intently. " 'Missed us this time,' the old man said, laughing. He seemed absolutely fearless."

The national committee of the Communist Party cabled Bob to return. He had done his customary job: now the war correspondent should take to the public platform, strive to stir the nation to an effort for Spain before it was too late. Bob came home; once again his voice was heard in the cities. All that could be done, he did. His party made a superhuman effort to mobilize America to come to the help of the Republic and Bob was the principal protagonist of that policy. Article after article poured from his pen, speech after speech; he buttonholed officials in the unions, in Washington, explained carefully, ardently, that the line from Spain to World War II was direct, unless Franco were defeated.

But history was unready. Roosevelt did not lift the embargo though unquestionably a majority in the nation would have agreed if he did. American reaction was still too strong, the prerequisite unity against fascism, too weak. So the giant pincers of fascism closed on Spain.

The fall of Barcelona, Spain, preceded the fall of Prague, Czechoslovakia, by a short run of history. Steve ran into Bob in New York a few days after the capitulation of Daladier and Chamberlain to Hitler at Munich. "This is it," Bob said gravely. Munich was a declaration of war's imminence: the green light to Hitler. But, Bob said immediately to Steve whose face now bore a long, vivid scar from the bullet at Belchite, "it wasn't in vain, over there." It held the fascists for two years or more, precious time that the anti-fascists of the world needed. World War II, which the 3,500 Americans had tried to forestall by enlisting with the Spanish Republic (and for which 1,200 would lie forever in Spain), yes, World War II was knocking at the door.

A Dream Comes True

THE STRANDS of a man's life tie together, so much of his present is compounded of yesterday and the beginnings of tomorrow. Through the fabric of Bob's life ran the bright red thread of Tom Mooney whose cause he had espoused since 1916. From Spain he had written his dear friend in the penitentiary of San Quentin; he had found, no, he had made, the time to write the man whose window on the world had steel bars. Twenty-two years had grayed the iron molder's head, withered his sturdy frame, and yet his bold dream never died. Mooney answered Bob's letter which informed the prisoner that a company of the Abraham Lincoln battalion had adopted his name: "It is the greatest honor of my life," Mooney replied.

Tom's name was in the headlines again this September morning of 1938. The United States Supreme Court denied his second petition to review his case. Bob promptly wrote the old warrior a letter to soften this latest disappointment. Mooney replied that his only hope now lay in the election of Culbert L. Olson, who was running for the governor's office of California on a New Deal Democratic ticket. Olson had made Mooney's freedom a campaign pledge.

The time, Bob and his party felt, was ripe, now, a long, long time coming, indeed. Labor's strength had grown greatly despite the fact that ten million, that year, still walked the streets seeking work, for capitalism was chronically ill, and only the resurrection of munitions manufacture, as world war approached, would pump blood into its veins. But the CIO was a fact, the AFL, too, had grown during the counter-offensive of American labor, granite facts, which prevented the country from going the way of fascism. Though the hardshell misleaders of the AFL tried to destroy the CIO and labor went into the 1938 elections divided, the New Deal coalition existed.

The Communist Party now had 75,000 members (with an

additional 20,000 in the Young Communist League). The Communists advocated the unity of all progressives in a common democratic front against the increased and hysterical offensive of corporative wealth.

In California, and elsewhere, they reminded labor that Mooney was still behind bars, and Bob, spokesman for his party on behalf of workingmen in prison, campaigned ardently for the old AFL leader's freedom.

Bob wrote Tom that he was certain the prison gates would soon open for him and his fellow-prisoner, Warren Billings. "I hope I haven't been smothering you under too many letters these days," Bob wrote Tom in October 1939. "My mind is whirling day and night about this great fact (I know it is a fact) that the end of this behind-the-bars phase of the great labor case in history is at hand. In all these terrible 22 years, I have had complete faith that this time was coming." Bob had visited California, and knew from his friends there that Olson's chances were more than good. He pleaded with Mooney to be very sure of his health, "to build himself up" for that great day when the doors came open. Tom would need his health for he would plunge into "the most strenuous and important tasks" of his life. Mooney had frequently expressed his intention to spend the remainder of his days advocating the unity of divided labor.

Election day passed and Olson was governor. Word came from California that Olson would free Mooney around January 7. On January 4, in a fever of exultation, Bob was on a plane to California.

He is in San Quentin, January 5, sees Mooney, and a letter to Lydia says, "He is coming out Saturday. Tomorrow is his last day in prison. How much that means to me!" January 7, Bob sat among some 500 of California's labor movement in the big, ornate room of the State Capital when Governor Olson rose to address them.

Picture the moment: its intensity is almost overpowering. A bright California sun is shining outside, its rays fall on the taut faces of men and women who know that a tragedy is being erased today; not fully. Who can return the days of a man who so loved his fellow-men that he surrendered the years of his youth for them? Yet it was no life wasted, for Mooney's cause had brought wisdom to countless millions. He also serves who stands

and waits, but this man had not waited; he had fought, every way he knew, behind his bars for that vindication that meant not only freedom, but the establishment of labor's just cause.

Governor Olson rises, pale, nervous with the moment, for even now powerful men try to obstruct, to delay, to prevent the pardon. "Mooney," the Governor says, "is innocent and was convicted solely because he was hated by the officialdom for his radical activities." After a long recital of the facts in the case, explaining why he believed in Mooney's innocence, Olson stares a moment at the hushed audience in silence. "If there is anybody with objections would he step forward and state to me now and here the information he desires to impart?" The Governor waits a full sixty seconds in a silence the roomful of humanity finds almost unbearable.

The Governor turns toward Mooney who sits in civilian clothes, his drawn face pale with the pallor of prison, his hair gray. "Tom Mooney, will you stand up?" The workingman rises, squares his shoulders. "I have signed and I now hand to you, Tom Mooney," Olson says, "this full and unconditional pardon."

The audience rises in a tumult, the hubbub lasts for two full minutes until Tom turns full face on the crowd and lifts his hand. Bob's hand goes to his eyes. Mooney speaks in a clear voice, "I can remember the screams of my old mother, my wife, when the jury filed in with its verdict, and a juryman, turning to the prosecutor, drew his finger across his throat." Tom would devote his life, he says, to help California "lift its shame by working constantly for the release of Warren Billings." He speaks of the "dark, sinister fascist threat," of the Jews persecuted in Germany, but before the Jews "it was labor, Socialism, the Communists." And if fascism is not halted, "soon it will be the Catholics, the Protestants, all of us." He dedicates the remainder of his years to help effect the unity of labor.

How Mooney walked down Market Street, in San Francisco, the next day, at the head of a vast procession, is history now. The parade marched over the same ground the Preparedness Day parade had covered, and Mooney strode on amid members of his old union, the AFL Molders. A new generation of labor leaders accompanied him (a generation before, their predecessors had betrayed him): new names now, new men, the pride of labor, Harry Bridges, then the CIO's West Coast director and leader of the longshoremen who campaigned persistently for his release;

George Kidwell, spokesman for the state AFL; many others, state officials as well. And among them Bob marched, thinking, how long, how long the warrior had waited for this day: twenty-two years.

Six months hence the gates were to open for Mooney's fellow-prisoner, Billings.

Telegrams of congratulations came to Mooney by the thousands; from men like Mayor Fiorello La Guardia, of New York, from Manhattan Borough President Stanley M. Isaacs, from Senator James M. Mead of New York who wrote: "Your ambition to bring about unity in labor's ranks is one that will be applauded everywhere. As a member of the Switchmen's Union I realize the importance of unity, and as a Senator of the United States I can appreciate what it means for the workers of this country." Now that Mooney was free, virtually every newspaper in the nation jumped on the bandwagon, even Hearst. All echoing, in their various ways, the sentiment of the New York *Post* which said: "When he could be imprisoned 'for life' because of his political opinions it meant that any American could be persecuted and hounded and jailed for his beliefs." None could blame Bob if he smiled ironically at the concluding sentence: a "regret" that the Supreme Court had "failed" the people when it failed to free Mooney. And yet, the *Post* added hastily, Mooney is free, "because American democracy possessed the fortitude and vitality to reassert itself in the face of tremendous obstacles and a powerfully organized and financed cabal." Who, more than Bob, knew the struggle, the work, the tears, the sacrifices of workingmen as they gave American democracy "the vitality to reassert itself."

And in the van of that long, arduous battle fought by innumerable trade unionists, liberals, writers, artists of the world was his party, his comrades, and they honored Bob who had been foremost in that victory.

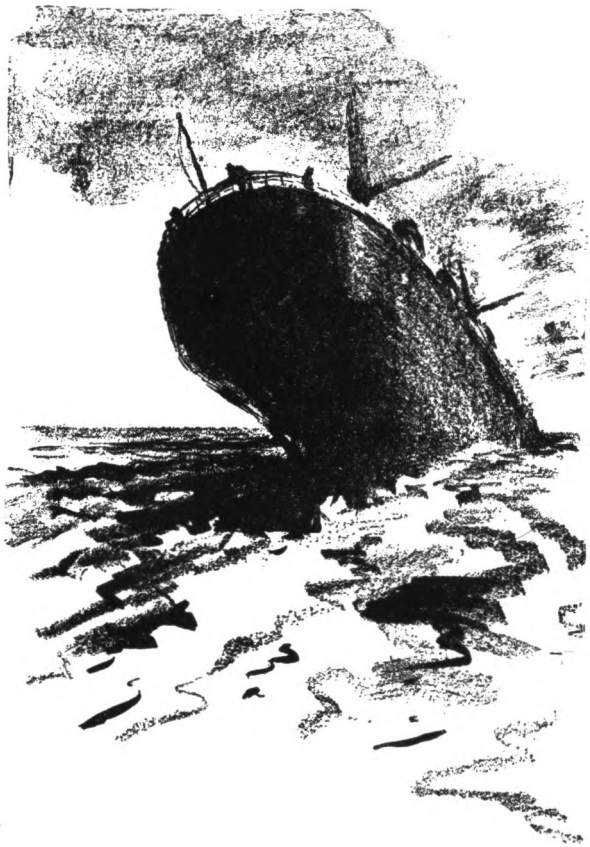
My Country, My Country!

I ENCOUNTERED him the dreadful morning after Pearl Harbor as he stood on the station platform of his home town awaiting the train. It was a cold Hudson Valley day, the wind tore down from the hills as he talked about the Pacific debacle, his face drawn, grave, the set of his mouth stern, hard. On him was the same long gray overcoat he wore in the Aragon badlands during the chilly months, and the same big gray hat that had the hint of the sombrero. He had come home a few hours before after a day-long conference of the party's leading committee: a few hours sleep and he was up, impatient, to get at the day's work. He paced the platform in his long stride peering impatiently up the tracks for the train.

I knew him well by now and I knew that the headlines in the newspapers were more than cold type to him. This man had stood in the hail of bombs beneath the Japanese Zeros, the artist in him had instantly reconstructed the sheer physical dimensions of the colossal tragedy and I knew that he felt, in every fibre, the words that he spoke. He would have taken a machine-gun and gone to stand in the front ranks for his nation.

As he sank into the seat by the window I thought of him in Spain, his frequent predictions that this catastrophe was inevitable, that our homeland would be under the bombs unless we, our Government, saw to it that besieged Spain got our support. History is the most exacting of judges and metes out its penalties without mercy. How often had he warned America, after Spain! He had traveled the country, speaking before meetings in a hundred cities, before workingmen and college students, eloquently reiterating the tragic case of Spain and all its consequences. His articles in the monthly organ of the Communist Party demonstrated his profound study of the Spanish experience that capped his decades-long work and his thought. His long piece in the December 1939 issue of *The Communist* reveals that he spent many

long nights, not only at the politics of the time, but at the military books, reminding one of Frederick Engels who had written so cogently on the American Civil War. Reading it, I had remembered his study of Clausewitz, a copy of which I had seen in his room in Barcelona, dog-eared, worn, the pages interlined with the red and blue of his pencil. What he wrote in December of 1939 forecast the turn of history six months later when, in May of 1940, France fell, overwhelmed by the Nazi horde, a defeat, he argued, made virtually inevitable by the subversion within France by its 200 families, its real rulers, and by the policy of Munich and of Non-Intervention during the Spanish conflict



that had weakened Spain disastrously. But many capitalists in America, he cried, "see a prophet who can furnish them a philosophy and a form of action to stem the tide of the nation's gains since the disillusionment with Herbert Hoover. They have heard the siren voice of Hitler across the seas." Again, as he had through the years since his first journey to the Soviet Union in 1918, he pled for the cooperation of the world's two greatest powers. "Although their two social and political systems are radically different and contrary, yet the first of the world's bourgeois democracies and the first of its Socialist democracies have at this juncture of history the compelling common need, and together, the decisive power—possibly to save our nation from the extinction of its past two hundred years of social progress." But falling bombs often teach what reason cannot: and now, Pearl Harbor!

Bob was, at this time, the acting secretary of his party, an enormous responsibility which his comrades had thrust upon him and from which he did not shy. He had taken the helm during the splurge of repression which the federal authorities began in 1939 when no few Communists were sent to jail under all kinds of pretexts concocted by the Department of Justice.

The New York Central train halted at Ossining for passengers, and, this fateful morning, we saw the broad, six-foot frame of Captain Patterson, the publisher of the New York *Daily News,* go down the aisle. He sat several seats before us, on the opposite side, his secretary with him carrying the morning newspapers. I had seen Patterson often on this train (he lived at Ossining, just below Bob's town) and it was a matter of comment between Bob and me that the editor of the paper with the greatest circulation in the land always began his reading for the day, we had noticed, with an intent perusal of the *Daily Worker.* Today his eye fell on the *Worker's* big front-page headline—"Everything for Victory." I watched Bob's face as his eyes studied the publisher of that newspaper which had led the wolf-pack against Spain and which, more than any other, urged, day in and day out, in its clipped, barroom style, the continued appeasement of Hitler, arguing that the "wrong war" be switched to the "right war," that we become Hitler's allies and stake our national destiny in a jehad, a holy war, to destroy the Soviet Union.

Patterson's face, as usual, was expressionless, his eye cold. Never had I seen a shadow of emotion, a normally human soft-

ening of feature, a smile, a frown even, as he scanned the newspapers, rarely did he cast a glance at a fellow passenger. He moved like a feudal lord on a mountain fastness, wrapped in his icy confidence of power.

Bob's face clouded, his eyes flashed with anger, as he watched Patterson and I felt I could trace Bob's reflections. Spelled aloud they would certainly cause a scandal on the car. Bob seemed to divine my thoughts, for he turned to me saying, "To beat Hitler the country must beat this fellow first."

Somehow, in these two men, you felt the course of our time, they embodied its history. One, the Tory, the other the patriot. Patterson stood history on its bewildered head and belabored Bob and his associates as traitors: the fable of the old thief who cried "Stop thief!" So now we had the war that the men like Patterson had made inevitable.

War! Bob, the soldier, had been to wars all his life. Well, a soldier cannot complain of war, he had once written to Tom Mooney. The job was to win it. Would we follow the course of this man to whom homeland was the wonderful continent that surged across rivers and mountains and plains between two oceans, to whom homeland was Valley Forge, and George Washington whose blood ran in his veins, Antietam and Gettysburg and now, Pearl Harbor; to whom homeland was, above all, the man in the dark pit, pick-axe in hand, the man in the clanging factory, the black man among the white bolls of cotton, the mother rearing the hungry young, the child in the classroom, the stuff of America. Or would our nation follow the buccaneer of the printing press who sat across the aisle? The answer to that question would determine our nation's destiny.

And Bob's party had its answer. Its course during the war was a natural consequence of its course since its birth. Steeled on the picketline, the Communists knew the requirements of battle, the voluntary, unceasing sacrifice victory demanded. More than any others in the ranks of labor, they knew the might of the strike, supported the no-strike pledge for the duration, even though the employers, wrapped in their private gold-tasseled flag, refused to accept a restriction on the dividend. His party argued daily in its newspapers that this greatest war of all time demanded the uttermost mobilization of all at home: industry, the countryside, the nation's women, the Negro 15,000,000, the youth. Should fascism triumph in Europe the swastika would

doubtless wave over the world; the bark of the Gauleiter would be heard on the streets of our land. The anti-fascist war was a war for national survival.

It became instantly clear that World War demanded the maximum of coalition warfare. The party (not alone, but most clearly, most passionately) argued that victory hinged upon the opening of a two-front war against the central concentration of Axis power, on the continent of Europe. The Soviet armies were fighting stubbornly and valiantly along a 1500-mile front, scorching the earth over which Guderian's tanks rolled. In retreat, the Red Armies took an enormous toll of the enemy, halted him in the suburbs of Moscow and Leningrad. That became a matter of admiration wherever men gathered to talk of war in every land of the world.

But the Western allies were making no commensurate effort. Arms from the United States piled up on British soil until the grisly joke became common that the island was in danger of sinking under the accumulations of unused material. Clearly the Second Front in the west was an immediate necessity, gigantic yet practical. Bob's voice thundered across the country saying so. His speaking tours took him from coast to coast, and he stood before radio microphones, at forums, bringing the issues to the people.

Typical was his address in St. Louis, May 4, 1942, when his old Alma Mater, the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch,* headlined on its front page: COMMUNIST LEADER URGES SECOND FRONT. Its subhead read: SAYS ATTACK ON WESTERN EUROPE WOULD BE TO ADVANTAGE OF UNITED STATES. A thousand citizens of St. Louis gathered at the Municipal Opera House to hear him. He met the nation's Pattersons head-on with all the cogency that was his and the fire which few could equal. The Copperheads, Bob cried, were arguing variously against the Second Front: the crassest, like Herbert Hoover, the Hearst newspapers, the *Daily News,* told the people they would do well to let the Germans and Russians fight it out to mutual exhaustion (a sentiment which a senator from Missouri, later the President of the land, echoed); then the nation heard the argument that our primary national interest lay in the Pacific, and that Japan was the main enemy—the idea of two simultaneous wars—and that our strength should be thrown into the Asian theater. Others said the assault on the French coastline would bring another disaster of the Dunquerque na-

ture, when several hundred thousand British troops were caged on a strip of coastline by the Blitzkriegers, escaping across the Channel by a miracle.

Bob's reply opened with the declaration of his party's abiding principle: that it never advanced a proposal of national character "which is not in accord with the interests of our country, the United States." That interest imperatively required the immediate establishment of the Second Front. He directed the sharp edge of his irony against those who said the Second Front was impracticable: "They seem to want," he roared, "a written guarantee from Goebbels that the American and British forces will be able to conquer the whole German Army before they are willing to see a landing made in France or Norway." But our troops would not have to conquer the whole German army. "From now on until the day of his death, Hitler will have to concentrate on the Eastern Front." Another Dunquerque? Hitler shoved the British onto the beaches May of 1940 because he could concentrate four million men on the Western front. But he could not do that now. "What we have to fear," he concluded, "is not another Dunquerque, but another Vichy"—Vichy, the capital of Nazi-occupied France, where the traitor, General Petain, governed as a satrap of Berlin.

The furious months passed in crescendo: Bob, first and foremost and forever, a peace-loving man of war, saw his comrades off to battle, gripping their hands, certain they would acquit themselves as patriots, as Communists. The majority of Americans are patriots, that is incontrovertible, and Bob gloried in that in the two hundred and seventy-four speeches he made in the first two years of the war. But of all who loved their country, the Communists, he was certain, knew best how to serve it. Understanding breeds courage, is the primary source stream of heroism. Conviction in a just cause can achieve miracles, surpass the strength of powerful but ignorant muscle, as he had seen in Spain, as he knew from the picketlines of several generations. Morale made the difference, and morale could triumph even if initially the people's enemy was stronger in materiel. Cromwell, Marat, Washington, Lincoln, Lenin, and now Stalin, proved that. The Communists have the advantage of morale, he knew, hence they would inevitably be the hardiest, canniest, ablest of warriors.

Fifteen thousand young men of his party went off to war. Many like John Gates, Bob Thompson, Gus Hall, foremost

leaders, enlisted, and the Communists were to return with a greater number of laurels than any other group of commensurate size, as their Encampment in Washington, later, in 1947, was to show. Bob said good-bye to Thompson, the tall, broad-shouldered Westerner whose wounds in Spain did not prevent him from achieving the Distinguished Service Cross in Buna; goodbye to Harry Bottcher, refugee from Nazi Germany, wounded twice in Spain, who became known as "the one-man army" in New Guinea where he was promoted to a captaincy, awarded the D.S.C., and soon afterward was killed in action.

The Veterans of the Lincoln Brigade, to whom Bottcher wrote from the battlefields, brought his letter to Bob in which he wrote: "While others were born to it, I acquired my right to America with sweat and blood. Sometimes," the hero said, "I could cry when I read about the injustices perpetrated on minorities or the profits derived from human lives. But crying won't help." And Bob read the letter to all who came into his office these days, treasuring it as the expression of a Communist fighting man.

National leaders of his party, district leaders, men with whom Bob worked through the years stopped by on the ninth floor on Twelfth Street to say their farewells. Men like him, of peace, went to war without evidence of fear or sorrow. If you were present you heard the booming voices of gaiety, men serene in their love for country. They did not think of death, they thought only of life, these extraordinary warriors. If death came, well, it was the Roman poet Horace who had sung a millenium before, *"Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori,"* sweet and fitting it is to die for your country.

In the course of his manifold duties, he continued his crusade for the rights of Americans. Touch their rights, whatever their political affiliations, and he was on his feet, fists clenched, squared off for battle. So it had been throughout all his political life, and today, in the midst of a war against fascism, he was all the more belligerent. His labors were prodigious on behalf of those who had been arrested before Pearl Harbor. His work as head of the party's defense commission on such matters did much to create a popular protest movement that enabled all to gain their freedom.

Not the least of his labors was the Schneiderman case. William Schneiderman, chairman of the state Communist Party in California, a resident of this land since he was two years of

age, and who was long naturalized, suffered the cancellation of his citizenship in June of 1940. The authorities charged that his membership in the Young Communist League before his naturalization was ample grounds. Bob wrote and spoke passionately on this case, emphasizing its peril to the millions of our foreign-born citizens. His counsel had much to do with the outcome when the United States Supreme Court, in October of 1942, reversed the lower court's ruling. Wendell Willkie, the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1940, argued Schneiderman's case before the high court. And Supreme Court Justice Murphy wrote the court's opinion which said, in this time of war and unprecedented democratic pressures of the nation's plain people, that it was a "tenable conclusion" that the party "desired to achieve its purpose by peaceful and democratic means."

After an ocean of blood seeped into the Russian steppes where seven million young men died and eight million more civilians, their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters; after multitudes of American perished in the heart-breaking island-hopping battles of the Pacific, the Second Front opened, June 6, 1944. Victory was now a matter of time.

Though the nature of the war had been, overwhelmingly, a war to destroy fascism, hence, a just war, the tigers of imperialism do not change their stripes. Increasingly calculations and actions entered the picture that had nothing to do with victory or the continuation of the anti-fascist coalition in the postwar world. The agreement at Teheran, which bespoke the continuation of the victorious coalition after the war, of generations of peace, was being subverted by those like Henry Luce who dreamed of the American Century in the postwar world, a globe dominated by American financial interests. After Roosevelt's death it became increasingly evident that this ambition dominated the circles of power. So the atom bomb fell on Hiroshima and on Nagasaki, incinerating hundreds of thousands of Asian civilians, women, children, a fact the colored peoples of the world will never forget. It was the first brutal deed of the cold war, a warning to the Soviet ally whose troops, by Allied agreement, were thundering down upon the Mikado's strongest armies in Manchuria and shattering them.

Bob, like many other American Communists (and others, not Communists but also dedicated to victory) had failed to

THE TWO BIG FELLOWS —*Workers Monthly*, 1925

give due consideration to the powerful imperialist elements in the war. He did not see, in his enthusiasm over the approaching victory, the advance of expansionist forces that were greatly strengthened during the war, forces that were to become dominant in our nation's councils as the conflict was ending. Bob's old colleague, Bill Foster, long foresaw the danger, arguing now, once victory was assured, that a thorough assessment of the war's course, its conclusion, and a judgment on the shape of the postwar world and on our nation was imperative. Tactics, strategy, to meet the future must be considered if the working class was not to be caught napping. If aggressive forces in the nation were becoming dominant, as Foster argued, they would doubtless break the wartime coalition. Then they would move swiftly against the trade unions to destroy the hard-earned standards of the workingmen and strive to suppress the expanding democratic spirit, the political and social advances the anti-fascist war had engendered. A policy that sought world domination, or, as the political pundits would say, to establish "American world leadership," brought reaction at home. Foster urged a re-assessment of party policy, and others like Eugene Dennis in the leadership, agreed with him. It began before the war officially ended.

World events made matters clearer as the American government, shortly after Roosevelt's death, embarked on a course that indicated its repudiation of agreements with the Soviet Union for postwar amity. One example was our government's insistence upon the entry of Peron's Argentina into the United Nations, then being founded, while it favored the exclusion of Poland.

The party's extraordinary convention in 1945 followed painstaking debate throughout its ranks. You saw Bob at the meetings, on the platform, his bright eyes focussed on the speakers, his hand cupped over his ear to catch every word.

Elsewhere in the records of the time and in Foster's *History of the Communist Party, U.S.A.*, you will find a comprehensive account of this discussion which the rigors of space bar from this biography. Suffice it to say here that Bob, through long days and nights, assessed the arguments, examined his own position, and came to his conclusions.

Men are fallible, even the best and the wisest of men, and the highest wisdom is the ability to recognize error and work to rectify it. Bob rolled up his sleeves.

Sons of Columbia

THE MORNING following the convention, the doors of the building scarcely had opened when Bob came to see Eugene Dennis, the tall Northwesterner who was now the party's national secretary, a man of extraordinary political sagacity. Bob shook hands in his courtly manner, warmly, but Dennis observed what he had not noticed before, the ravages of time and hard work etched in the lines of the old veteran's strong face. Bob got to the point immediately: he wished to be assigned to work for his party in the South, his old home country.

Dennis glanced sharply at Bob: he treasured his pioneering worth as a crusader for the rights of the Negro people, understood his desire to go South where enormous work had to be done. But the man was 61 now, and work in the southern land required extraordinary physical powers as well as the moral stamina he had. Political work there meant continuous and arduous travel through a dozen and more states, facing dangers daily in a region where the state, county and city governments stood on the wary outlook for all men who advocated equality.

Such considerations, Dennis knew, had no place in the calculations of the big, bald, keen-eyed crusader sitting before him. And as Bob talked on passionately, stating his reasons for requesting the assignment, talking with such ardor, spirit, candor, Gene was moved, thinking, "You grand old warrior." Tom Paine had said where liberty is not, there was his home; this man here was of the same mould, a Communist through and through, who measured the worth of his life by his services to mankind.

After due consideration, his party conceded, yes, he would go. When the editors of the *Worker* learned he had decided to work in the South they offered him the post of Southern editor. Bob, elated, promptly accepted it.

Lydia and Bob came to Washington, where his headquarters would be. They moved into a small apartment in a mixed neighborhood, big enough for their books, her easel, Bob's typewriter. His daily rounds included the National Press Building where the *Worker's* offices were located. Vivid dispatches on the day's events south of the Mason-Dixon line began to appear almost from the first day he arrived. Soon he was on the day-coaches traveling through the South, writing during the days, talking to cautious, earnest groups of Negro and white workingmen during the long evenings. Durham saw him, Charleston, Savannah, Atlanta, Birmingham, New Orleans, the big nervous cities of the South that had grown spectacularly during the war.

Like all Communists Bob preferred to work publicly, argue his views in the market-place. The claim that Communists are conspirators of the hush-hush, cloak-and-dagger school is one of the most absurd of all lies about them. Certainly if the rights of the Constitution were denied them, as they were in the Black Belt country, and it was necessary to speak behind drawn curtains, well, that was that. It had to be done and any man worth his salt would do it as Sam Adams, Jefferson, Garrison, Douglass, and generations of labor organizers had done. But in the big southern cities Bob notified the newspapers he was in town and invited the reporters to press conferences. Where there were funds, he spoke on the local radio stations. Everywhere he could he held public mass meetings.

As Bob stopped on a street corner in New Orleans where he had come to speak, February 25, 1946, the newspaper he bought carried a story on an inside page that caught his eye. A "race riot" was raging in Columbia, Tennessee, a town of 3,000 Negroes and 6,000 whites. State Police "were searching every home for deadly weapons," every Negro home, of course. Five hundred Guardsmen in "full battle regalia" were patrolling the streets of the Negro section "maintaining order." Seventy Negroes were under arrest, twelve charged with attempted murder.

Bob broke into a run for a telephone booth. He called the *Daily Worker* in New York. He must go immediately to Columbia, he said, where an atrocity greater than Scottsboro was being committed. Unchecked, similar outrages would spread through the South, spread across the land. Already Negroes were being murdered in southern cities for daring to enter the polls on voting day. Almost every day had its quota of unsolved

killings, the corpses of Negroes were found on public highways, or found floating in quiet streams. They had assumed that their contribution to the defeat of our nation's fascist enemy abroad gave them the simple right to exercise their democratic rights at home. The racist bullets mocked that assumption.

In an hour Bob was on a night train headed for Nashville, near Columbia, a city he had visited several months before. Columbia, nearby, was in the image of many southern towns. Its weather-beaten streets met at the Courthouse Square. A squat ante-bellum building, the Courthouse itself, stood among trees whose shade covered the town in the days of Antietam and Bull's Run. The statue of a Confederate general rose bleakly at the side of a brick walk. And now Bob saw helmeted state guardsmen standing in military file at every corner, the rifles of authority in hand. Many were an apple-cheeked seventeen, eighteen, scowling officiously as they frisked Negro pedestrians twice, thrice their age, ordering them to hold their hands high.

Within twenty-four hours after Bob arrived, slipping into the homes of whites and Negroes, he had the grim outline of the southern story. Oh, how tragically familiar it was, this Dixie story: the sudden explosion of white violence that lies like a subterranean charge beneath the placid, sleepy green of the southern town.

A white clerk had struck a Negro mother, Mrs. Gladys Stephenson who had gone, in the company of her 19-year-old sailor son, James C. Stephenson, to pick up a radio at a repair shop. She had dared to remonstrate when she discovered the radio was not repaired though they charged her for the service. Her son, just home from the war, a Navy man who had served two years aboard the U.S.S. Prometheus, veteran of Okinawa and other battles, had struck back so effectively that he knocked one of the whites through the store's plate-glass window. In a trice, the cry, "Let's lynch 'em," rose on the quiet street across from the courthouse and its Confederate general. Police came running and they struck the mother with a nightstick after she had cried out as they beat her son. The magistrate fined Mrs. Stephenson and her son $50 each. Leading Negro citizens, the elders of their community, moved immediately with the loyal dispatch born of an ancient solidarity to their own. They brought the cash for the fines to the magistrate's office, but before they arrived, another judge, Squire C. Hayes Denton had intervened

to change the charge to "an attempt to commit murder." Bail of $3,500 each was now required. The Negroes returned to their community to raise the high bail, moving fast, sensing the impending danger.

Bands of liquored-up whites gathered around the courthouse, toting revolvers and rifles. "Let's go," they shouted, "what are we waiting for?" Negro veterans of World War II promptly formed squads for defense and stood solidly on the streets of their community known as Mink Slide. Because the Negroes had the temerity to defend themselves, the Governor sent 500 state guardsmen bearing machine-guns into town, forming a cordon around the Negro streets. By five A.M. they were marching through Mink Slide, guns blazing away in the dark, riddling buildings indiscriminately. "To the war veterans," the Columbia *Daily News* wrote, "the scene was reminiscent of American troops going through a captured town in Europe."

Bob's first dispatch clearly established the collusion between the would-be lynchers and the officers of the law. While Bob was in town, the next day, the Governor of the state arrived, briskly efficient, the army at his side, and Negroes were rounded up by the hundreds and jammed into prison cells. The Governor summoned the press and spoke darkly of "an armed uprising of Negroes attempting to murder the white population of Columbia." During the grillings in the police chambers two Negroes were shot to death by state policemen. There was no coroner's inquest for the black men, no coroner's verdict. The official reason was blandly simple: "They were shot while attempting to kill officers of the law in the Maury County jail."

The day after Bob arrived, the *Daily Worker* sent a reporter to work with him on the scene. Bob clapped him on the back, pumped his hand. It was his old cell-mate, Harry Raymond, arrested with him during the unemployment demonstration in Union Square March 6, 1930. Raymond, an unemployed seaman of that time, had become one of the best newspapermen in New York, fearless, fast, a man to whom honest men would talk. The two worked together, day after day, through the nights, ignoring the lynch-spirit, to get their story, which the *Daily Worker,* alone among the metropolitan newspapers carried daily under great headlines.

Bob considered how best to use the facts to defend the jailed Negroes whose lives were now in jeopardy. The magistrate, Squire Denton, who had changed the charge to one of "at-

tempted murder" against the Negro mother and the boy, had fixed bail at $5,000 each for the 70 Negroes who were detained of the hundreds originally arrested. They were charged with conspiracy to commit murder.

Bob saw with satisfaction that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People was sending attorneys to put up the bail bond which was being raised nationally. The NAACP sounded a country-wide alarm that asked for a vast public outcry. Bob slept little those days, sat up in his hotel room in Nashville most of the night, almost till down, his feet drawn up under him, his cap over his bald head, writing hard, thinking hard. How best to help the NAACP in this case? Lydia came down from Washington to help: she was in the libraries and newspaper offices going through the files, searching for the facts that Bob knew were there and that must reach the public eye, the deadly facts that lend understanding.

Some sixth sense, born of his familiarity with these cases, induced him to focus on the life of the magistrate, C. Hayes Denton, who had transformed the original charge of a mere fist fight into a dangerous felony. Bob had learned from Mooney's case, from Scottsboro, that there is always a "break" in the fabric of the frame-up: life inevitably refutes the manufactured stories of the framers. The task is to find that break, and he hunted for it carefully, assiduously, confident that truth is a faithful ally. Magistrate Denton was no "furriner"; Bob heard a few things about the man, he dug for the rest, went to the files of the Columbia newspapers, the Nashville papers, the court records; Lydia brought him material by the basketful. He spoke to hundreds and he found what he suspected.

Thirteen years before, in 1933, Magistrate Denton had taken a leading part in the lynching of a 17-year-old Negro boy. Invitations to the killing were issued, by phone, as though you were invited to a dance. The telephones were party lines and housewives listened in on every call, knew the voice making the calls. A crowd arrived in a cavalcade of automobiles. The youngster who had been spirited away by members of his people to Nashville for safety, later was kidnapped there by white men in two cars whose license numbers were jotted down by several Negro students of Fisk University. The numbers belonged to the magistrate and to the postmaster of the town where the Negro boy lived. Before the boy was hanged, he was publicly castrated. And the culprits had gone free.

Bob began to write a pamphlet on the facts which he called *Lynching and Frame-up in Tennessee.* It is a devastating indictment, the product of tireless work and a lifetime's experience. Written in fury, he documented it with irrefutable fact, riveted down by public documents and affidavits.

"And all of the affidavits and heartfelt statements of the best men and women of Tennessee from which I have drawn these facts went into the dust to await an Armageddon," Bob wrote in the pamphlet. For the state authorities had refused to move, the newspapers had refused to publish the damning facts. And the magistrate who was the principal culprit of this atrocity in 1933, was now, in 1946, the official who set bail on the Stephensons and then on the indicted Negroes who were to stand trial.

Bob made further charges. The national furor over the Columbia case had obliged Tom C. Clark, the Attorney-General of the United States (now a Justice of the Supreme Court) to conduct a federal investigation into the violations of the constitutional rights there. "What Mr. Clark gave was a sham investigation that shielded the lynch gang and aided the frame-up of the Negroes." Bob wrote. And he proved that the federal authorities protected the heinous magistrate Denton, who assisted the United States grand jury in its "deliberations."

It is necessary to dwell a moment here, assessing the work of Bob, the Communists, on this case. Latterly, and for many years, it is the custom of the party's enemies to charge that the Communists "used" the Negro issue for partisan advantage, a particularly revolting libel among the many libels. Bob, from the outset, knew and welcomed the fact that the NAACP was in charge of the defense: its lawyers pleaded the case; its leaders charted the strategy in the courtroom, its speakers stood before audiences in many cities explaining the gruesome issues of Columbia.

And Bob and his comrades stood in the midst of Columbia, ignoring the swirls of danger about them, working indefatigably. He was in and out of the smouldering town from the first days, digging up a multitude of facts that damned the prosecution. These truths he offered to the NAACP counsel; through the *Worker* and through his pamphlet they became the property of the land.

When the first trial opened of twenty-nine of the Negroes finally selected to go before the jury, Bob emphasized "the

magnificent fight" of the NAACP attorneys. Before its opening he made many journeys to New York and to other cities with proposals to help create the public pressure that he regarded as the Court of Highest Appeal. His party's energetic members spread the truth of Columbia everywhere, bringing resolutions into the halls of trade unions, into community organizations, to newspapers. Their sole mandate, their only consideration, was to save the lives and the liberties of those in the dock and to help the fifteen millions whose fate was inevitably affected by victory or defeat in this Tennessee courtroom. "Partisan advantage?" Yes, they were party to the cause of freedom. To that Bob and his comrades would plead guilty.

The trial became spectacular in the way of all such trials. The prosecuting attorney for the sovereign state of Tennessee, Paul A. Bumpus, threatened to strike Leon A. Ransom, the NAACP attorney, "over the head with a chair," if he dared once again "to contradict the word of a white man." The head of the state policemen who led the armed assault on Mink Slide in its night of terror shouted obscene threats at Vincent Sheean, the noted writer, for his reports on the trial. The judge genially refused to intervene.

But the groundwork was done: the nation's spotlight was on Tennessee. The all-white jury returned with a verdict that acquitted twenty-three of the first twenty-five tried. But two of the defendants were condemned to twenty-one years in prison. The charges were later dropped against those who were to come to trial and the two convicted men were released after several years behind bars.

The judge took time to denounce men like Bob, all who had toiled hardily to prevent the lynching, legal or otherwise, of the Columbia Negroes: *they*—not those who had lynched 203 times in the state of Tennessee, as Bob's pamphlet proved,—they were "deliberately agitating matters of this kind to cause difficulties between races." Not a solitary judicial word to deplore the FBI's failure to apprehend a solitary white and bring him to book. Not a solitary word condemning the governor who blamed the Negro populace of Columbia for the atrocity. No breath even of Magistrate Denton's gory past or his present.

And Bob replied to the judge characteristically: "We will agitate matters of this kind until the sun has set upon the last lynching and until the last lynchers' frame-up shall have ceased to befoul our country."

You Can't Think That!

SIXTY-THREE NOW, the fringe of hair on his bald head was snow-white, but the set of his shoulders was as square as it was in the days when he walked the Texas prairies, half a century before. The penetrating glance had not dimmed a whit. The infirmities of time seemed to by-pass this man. An inner dynamo supplied him the joyous energy for twelve, fourteen hours of work each day, and also for four, five hours each night in which he read, studied, conned the times. After the day's public work was done, his meetings, his conferences, he turned hungrily to his books, the Marxist classics chiefly, underscoring the passages he sought with the red and blue of his artist's pencil as much a part of him as his finger-tips. He marked the pages of the Marxist classics by carefully inserting long strips of paper which he cut meticulously with his big, editor's scissors, his manner almost reverential toward the pages that contained, he felt, the quintessence of man's wisdom. He was a diligent member of the party's Negro commission and its legislative commission, responsibilities that he treasured as a farmer regards his most fertile acres.

He had cultivated the faculty of total absorption in the problem at hand, could ignore time and self as he hunted the solutions to the questions his party was debating. A curtain came down on the other vexing problems that occupied him a moment before and he could move into the issue at hand with an undivided mind. A memory of Lenin was bright within him, he mentioned to Lydia several times, Lenin, who could, at a fateful congress of his party, open a grammar book of a foreign language he was studying and sit, a plain, almost humdrum figure of a man, absorbed in verbs and participles a few moments before he rose to go to the dais to deliver a major report.

So Bob's lamp burned, far past midnight. He resented the hours that sleep stole, for the work was endless: speeches to prepare, articles to write, reports, surveys to complete, pamphlets with their inexorable deadlines. Pamphlets, like the one he wrote when his friend, Ben Davis, one of his "sons," as he referred to men whose careers he nurtured, was elected for the second time to the City Council of New York. The pamphlet is a labor of love. There is an oracular quality to the title he gave it: "Tell The People How Ben Davis Was Elected." There again you find the revelation of his profound study of Negro life in America, and his absorbing interest in electoral campaigning, the use of the ballot to advance his nation's welfare. "The unity of the labor movement and the Negro people"—his primary passion as the years attested—elected Ben.

His speeches, like his writings, were meticulously prepared, no matter their brevity. The artist's pride was in him forever. Those who heard him at the memorial meeting for John Reed in this time were moved by his testimony that delineated a man, an artist, of his generation. Much of what he says of the poet who wrote *Ten Days That Shook the World* applies to himself. Reed, he said, stands as a great figure for all of us, and for every artist "whose mind is touched with the fire of modern life." He must have thought of the companions of his youth and later, men like Art Young, Boardman Robinson, Theodore Dreiser, Mike Gold, William Gropper, Fred Ellis, Rockwell Kent, Hugo Gellert, when he put down on paper that among his generation Reed pioneered "in applying the principle that art is a fighting instrument in the great affairs of men."

Consider Reed, "no economist, and without a great experience of political education . . . who could, as artist, discern that a new world was dawning and that the lifetime of every man, woman, in the whole world" would be dominated by the growth of the modern labor movement in all countries. The artist in John Reed, attuned to truth, enabled him to understand that the Russian Revolution "with whatever peculiarities its Russian locale necessarily endowed it, was an all-embracing world phenomenon," containing within its national form "the substance of a modern class struggle which was no more Russian than it was American and French and British and Chinese and Yugoslavian." Reed could perceive through "the sensitive antennae of his art" that the class struggle which broke with such mag-

nificent fury in Russia was "the substance of all life, the inevitable struggle of the forces of mankind for advancement."

This speech, delivered a few months after the close of the Second World War, reiterated his party's contention that imperialist voices "among us today are trying to lead us toward the third world war." His words have peculiar pertinence for us today, half a decade later, and illustrated his exceptional gift of catching a startling image to depict a concept: the artist in him glowed to the last. Standing on the platform at Manhattan Center, big, impressive, a seer in tweed, his beetling brows knit in a frown at the thought, he said the world "is already being asked to fling itself into a suicidal attempt to destroy the great movement of human civilization that is embodied in the present Socialist state of Soviet Russia." Among other purposeful insanities was the "current boast" that the Western powers "may use the atom bomb as the means to destroy the Socialist future of mankind."

He is not one to disparage the power of technology. But he reminded men that Hitler too had boasted of his secret weapon, fatally omitting the central role of "man himself." So the present boast of imperialism overlooks the vast transformation among men, change "more potent than any technical instrument."

For one must, he thundered, realize that in 1917, in Russia, "the world saw the splitting of the political atom" releasing that sole force "that is mightier than thermonuclear energy." The imperialists will learn that mankind will not go out, either with a bang or a whimper, as T. S. Eliot prophesied gloomily.

Yes, sixty-three, the head is white but the eye is clear. Much to see these days, much, some feared too much. The portents of the time are alarming, more so as day followed day. The newspapers in a single voice clamored "to get tough with Russia." The phrase "preventive war" gained common and dreadful currency.

The cold war began. Americans were told with hypnotic repetition, that the Socialist peoples of the Soviet Union desired war and the preparations our government made, creating a ring of armed bases around the Soviet periphery, and knocking together a variety of military pacts directed against the East, was purely for our nation's defense. Every word for peace that the spokesmen of the Socialist countries spoke in the halls of the

United Nations were the words of proletarian Machiavellis, guileful devil-men, every resolution they offered was promptly voted down by the star-spangled ring master.

To move for war required the enormous transformation of a nation and that was no simple matter. The men and women of the trade unions, our nation generally, had absorbed much of a virile democratic spirit in the successful war against German fascism. And the working class was in a belligerent mood. The financiers had profited mightily while the workingman's way of life and his wage declined. To live cost thirty-five per cent more than it did in 1940 but wartime wages were checked at a fifteen per cent advance, under the Little Steel Formula. The pay workers brought home, their real wages, declined disastrously after the war when the insatiable need for munitions ceased, and the era of overtime ended. The biggest strike year in all American history exploded in 1946: 4,500,000 workingmen went on the picketlines striking for more in their pay envelope so that they could meet the increased cost of living. And nearly all the strikes were won.

The alarmed employers assessed this threat to their plans

A GOVERNMENT FED BABY —*Daily Worker,* 1925

for world domination. And suddenly the nation heard of "spies" again, "sabotage" again, "foreign agents" again, as it had heard in 1919. Non-existent atom secrets were "stolen"; "Soviet agents" sat in the high places of government, Communists "infiltrated,' Reds "dominated"—trade unions, universities, government departments, Parent-Teachers' Associations, churches, ministers' associations, public schools, movie studios, theaters, the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, the newspaper columns, all working secretly, furtively, omniscient and omnipresent. And so, advancing under cover of this red fog, the 80th Congress, in June of 1947, succeeded in passing the Taft-Hartley law, a big stride toward fascism. It was regarded by the American Communists, most clearly, and by no few others, as a step toward transforming unions into the state-dominated labor bodies Hitler and Mussolini formed.

The Communists fought doggedly; John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers refused to sign under it, but despite fervidly eloquent denunciations, the hierarchs of the AFL and the CIO made their easy accommodations. They could do so successfully only because so many of their members were bewildered and deluded by the foreign policy of the government, its neurotic clamor that our nation was menaced by the Soviet Union, by its diabolic agents in our midst. Bob and many other Communists drew the parallel to 1798, the time of the dreaded Alien and Sedition law, which could only gain passage after the Federalist war hawks screamed that the secret agents of revolutionary France permeated the American scene, "Jacobin Jefferson" chief among them. Today the descendants of the Tories pointed the finger, not at Paris, but at Moscow. And so a labor leader like James B. Carey could cry: "In the last war, we joined with the Communists to fight the fascists. In another war we will join with the fascists to defeat the Communists."

Now the employers moved fast, against Communists. They felt it imperative to isolate the Communists from the labor movement. And the Department of Justice was impatiently willing and traditionally eager. The Un-American Committee headed by J. Parnell Thomas (later jailed as a common thief) summoned hundreds to appear before it.

The government was nervously eager to "get" Eugene Dennis, the gifted general secretary of the Communist Party. Served with a subpoena to appear before the Un-American Committee,

Dennis refused to testify, on principle, on Constitutional grounds. He contended that the committee was illegally constituted because its members numbered John Rankin, the Mississippi Congressman, "elected" in polls which refused the Negro his right to the franchise, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Committee swifty voted him in contempt of Congress and a jury indicted him.

Bob and his comrades realized that this was an opening gun against their party, a further big encroachment upon the rights of the nation. And once again the old Texan got into harness. Who, more than he, knew the constitutional grounds involved.

Bob loved this tall, quiet young man of the Northwest, who had been a leader of the movement for well over a decade. A thoughtful working class youngster, he had lived through the Seattle general strike, listened carefully to the arguments of the Wobblies, then the Communists as he worked down the Pacific Coast as seaman, teamster, electrician. He decided the Communists had the answers to the questions he asked, and became one in 1926. March 6, 1930, the Los Angeles police dragged him to prison, tearing him from a palm tree which he climbed to address the jobless meeting on Pershing Square, virtually at the same moment Bob was arrested in New York, and for the same reason, for the crime of opposing hunger. Later Dennis was elected head of the party in the state of Wisconsin where he manifested his exceptional political abilities. In 1946 his comrades chose him general secretary of his party.

Bob worked with Dennis' defense lawyers for the trial that was to begin the middle of June 1947. He studied the briefs, underscoring the Constitutional issues at stake, interviewed many lawyers on behalf of his comrade, saw them in New York, in Washington, in Chicago, working round the clock. He caught an airplane in New York to confer with a lawyer in Chicago: beginning a fantastic journey whose hazards were not untypical of his days, the rigors of his life. The plane's engines went dead near the Ohio border, the plane limped back to LaGuardia field on one propellor. Off again, on again, in a replacement plane that struggled through a high wind over Indiana to land him eight and a half hours late, all appointments missed, hotel reservations forfeited, obliged to sit up all night in a lobby. He was unearthly tired and sleepy Friday June 13, when, back again

in New York, he stood and waited, three hours this time, for a plane to Washington. No seats vacant in the waiting room he stood, brooding over some last-minute matters pertaining to Dennis' defense, when suddenly he went so dizzy with pain and nausea that his knees buckled. A woman got up from a big chair and he dropped into it, the walls of the room reeling. Before he could rest, they announced his plane for Washington and he rose, bone-weary, to stumble to the gate. He leaned against the wall waiting another forty minutes until it was ready. It landed him in Washington—four hours late.

Working now, sheerly on nerve and grit, he concluded his business with the lawyers in Washington. Joe Brodsky, his life-long comrade, alarmed at the pallor he saw in the Texan's face, drove him to the Washington airport to return to New York and to some sleep and rest, so evidently imperative. Obviously, the post-war service of the airline was still in frightful disrepair, for the plane that was due in ten minutes arrived two and a half hours late. The waiting room was thick with congressmen waiting for planes, with tobacco smoke, and their conversation expressed their worriment over the air travel. There had been a spate of Memorial Day accidents, several days before: a big four-motored Douglas had failed to rise and had burned on La Guardia field and 43 died; the next day another Douglas DC-4 crashed at Fort Deposit, Maryland, killing 53. Both, Bob commented to Brodsky, belonged to the model called the backbone of the nation's commercial airlines, designed for passenger service. He commented wearily on the disregard for human safety, for life, where the dividend was concerned. The Douglas DC-4 never arrived, for which Bob, struck by wave after wave of nausea, was waiting. It ran head-on at 225 miles per hour into a rocky crag of the Blue Ridge mountains and all of its crew and passengers were killed.

Bob and Joe returned to New York by rail, Bob's chest throbbing painfully. Brodsky summoned a friend who drove Bob up the Hudson to his home, and Lydia, taking one glance at him, put him to bed and telephoned the doctor. He examined Bob, ordered him to remain in bed until the next morning, when he would return with a heart specialist. When the doctor left, Bob recalling an unfinished task, rose from bed, and finished typing a report of his conversations with the lawyers to send to Dennis. The next day the specialist, after his examination,

sternly ordered Bob not to lift his head from the pillow until further orders. An artery had broken in his heart: coronary occlusion. He remained in that bed, flat on his back, for six months.

Strangely, Joe Brodsky, his comrade-in-arms for more than a quarter century, his colleague in the Scottsboro case and in many others, a man of infinite energy and zeal, also had a heart attack almost immediately after the return from Washington. He was ordered to rest, stay abed, but he returned to work at his office, where he died in his chair.

Silently, Bob grieved for his comrade, the doughty, laughing, fearless, incorruptible Joe, one of the best of men, one of the best of comrades, of Communists, he had known.

As he lay the interminable months of convalescence, he brooded over his future. The months might drag, lead-footed, into years. Slowly a resolve crystallized. If he could not dive into the exhilarating routine of daily work for his party, he would use the time to serve in the only way left him: to write his autobiography that would, simultaneously, be a history of his time. That too was service. He lay for hours, immobile, absolutely motionless, but there must have been a whir of activity in his mind as he thought of his past, conjuring up the memories that came, sharp and clear, etched in remarkable detail. The bright pageant of yesterday moved before him, his boyhood adventures, his old friends, old comrades, his triumphs and his tribulations. His enthusiasm for the book mounted. It might help guide the footsteps of others and it would be remarkable fun. Books, so often, he said to Lydia, opened doors. He remembered his beloved Johnny Gates, that gallant gamecock of a soldier, now editor of the *Daily Worker,* who told him how Bernard Shaw's *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism* opened a new world for him, back in 1930, when he stumbled through the murk of the depression: it had turned the course of his life. So he husbanded his strength, allowed the fragile tissue to mend, at least to some degree, and mending, he would work within the limits the physicians prescribed.

He began to work, some seven months after that dismal day when the planes kept falling out of the sky. He drew up an outline, meticulous and yet it was vast. He would begin at the beginning, start with the first of his ancestors in America. Man travels with his past as he moves into his future: like the

boy, father of the man, yesterday sires today. He refreshed his memory with books, once again he studied the days of his country's forefathers. Bob took astonishing pains to trace the lives of his own forebears. Not, of course, from any reason of patrician pride in lineage but simply because he loved the pioneering dash and courage of his progenitors and he knew the bearing their lives had on their descendants today. His eyes crackled when he discovered that a forebear, a Brigadier General John Minor, a Virginia farmer of the early seventeen hundreds, defended a Negro freedman in 1730 who was unjustly charged with rape. The Colonial soldier gave unsparingly of his substance, his energy and talent to win the Negro's vindication. Strange, Bob said, how the past dovetails miraculously into the present.

And as soon as he could dredge up the energy he sat down to write a guidepost for his work, the draft of an introduction to his book which I found among his papers. "Just now," he wrote, "in the year 1948, the country is ringing with the sharp cries of the vigilante. 'Send the Communists back where they came from!' And, as I am a son of an immigrant family, perhaps I must tell you something more than that I was born in San Antonio. If there is anything I hate, it is family trees, and particularly Southern family trees. But I see that a fellow who is at the head of the vigilante mob today, one time named Feeney and now called J. Parnell Thomas, couples his wild lynching cries against Negroes and Communists, and privately against the members of the church to which he belonged when he was named Feeney, with an attempt to show a more or less short line of ancestors of American origin. So perhaps it is best in the interest of political clarity, that I, a Communist, put down what I know of my family background—a thing which I've always been ashamed to do because I believe with Benjamin Franklin about ancestors."

Memory cast up recollections of his conversations with Lenin, the man, perhaps more than any other, who influenced his mind and his life. "The greatest man this world has known in a hundred years," he continued, "whom it was my good fortune to know, suggested to me many years ago that it would be a mistake not to make known that my forefathers were native Americans for some three centuries back. And he asked me, by the way:

" 'But what did they do in the American Revolution?'

" 'They were all in the Revolutionary Army, so far as I know.'

" 'Ah,' Lenin replied with a smile, 'you can use that in your trial.'

"This," Bob commented, "was undoubtedly a sly reminder of some of the shortcomings of my country in that year, 1921."

"And so," he concluded, "I will tell you, friend reader—and also you, J. Parnell Thomas, and you, John Rankin, you damned Ku Kluxers—who my ancestors were, to the extent that this is possible."

Shuffling around in his carpet slippers, the robe loose over his big frame, he took the volumes down from the shelves which he read, by the scores, filling in the details of the charging decades through which his life had raced. He made copious notes, in his round careful script, which Lydia and other friends typed for him, vivid fragments of his first years. Sometimes he dictated a sheaf of notes, "from the top of my head," he said, believing that that thought with which he awoke, which had most recently rolled about in his head, was the best with which to start the day's work, came down the freshest in the few daily hours the doctors allowed.

Lydia kept a wary eye on him: he had no inner censor, she knew, never had, nothing within to warn him against exhaustion. She had to serve for that. And studying his face, she would remind him gently, but sternly, when time was up.

He made good headway, he felt, had the notes and recollections of his first dozen years down pretty well, and a little later skipping several decades of time, he got down a fairly complete version of the Mooney case—testimony, to me as I moved through his papers a few years later—how vital that epic had been to his political education, to his life.

It was to remain the only virtually complete chapter of his projected work. For one day, shortly afterward, he turned his radio on casually for the news. His wounded heart skipped more than a beat as he listened: the topmost leaders of the Communist Party, its national committee, had just been arrested as they were meeting in the old, familiar boardroom on East 12th Street, New York. He stood, the statue of a man, in dead silence, breathless, and then sank into the big chair near his bed, laid the pages of his autobiography down, and thought a long time. It was virtually the last time he worked on his own story.

The old warrior, wounded unto death, picked up his old lance again. Nothing was more sacred than the defense of his comrades hemmed in by their enemy.

Now the hours of his life, as many as fate allowed him, were predetermined. And, as once before he had sacrificed his epic cartoon for the work he felt he must do, today he laid aside this treasured autobiography for the responsibility he felt was his. His comrades, when they learned of his decision (eager for his help, certainly, for he was the master in this field of battle) sought to convince him to complete his autobiography which they knew would be a treasure house of invaluable experience. But a man does what he must. This, he decided, was his chief battle.

Though he dared not leave his home, he was allowed by now to walk down the single flight to his little terrace and back, but no more; he could write letters, memos, suggestions, dig into the research books, draw on his enormous experience.

I came to see him frequently these days, saw how he lived every moment of that case, followed hawk-like, every move in the courts. He mastered every detail of the intricate, yet familiar, oh so damnedly familiar, strategy of the prosecution.

How insatiable for fact he was! I went to court often to write pieces on the trial. He grilled me, as he did every other man he knew who stepped into the courthouse at Foley Square, with a passionate, almost frightening, absorption. Describe the courtroom, he pleaded, its size, its furnishing, the face of the judge, his demeanor, his style, what did he say, how did he say it, depict the jury, the stance of the prosecutors, the defense lawyers, the words of the defendants, the spectators, the newspapermen. No detail was too trivial, no fact too remote. It was as though he were projecting himself, with all his terrible intentness, through the forty miles into the great marble skyscraper, to sit at the side of his comrades, in the federal courthouse.

And when I returned home, often after midnight, came up the hill past his home toward mine, I saw the light burning in his study, and as the feverish weeks moved into winter, and the leaves fell from the great elm that guarded his home, I could make out the outline of his big body bent over his desk as he pored over books, books of jurisprudence, history, Marxist classics, trial records, seeking the pertinent passages, underscoring them, as I well knew, with his unique blue and red

pencil. Sometimes he wrote until dawn, ignoring Lydia's fervent protestations, and when the trial opened, he would stand early in the morning, often in the rain or sleet, a poncho over his shoulders, on the road when I rode by to make the morning train. He had in his outstretched hand a fat letter to mail to Gene, to the other defendants, containing his proposals, sage proposals they felt, so profuse sometimes that they could not make use of them all. Every letter, Dennis said, contained some nugget of wisdom, some new slant, some hitherto unknown fact, some shining insight.

He had proposals for tactics in the courtroom; proposals for grand strategy, and always he had within him the wisdom of the many cases in which he had been the crusader, the essence of which was his knowledge that the highest court is the people.

Since the indictment itself was unconstitutional—it violated the very first amendment—he studied every available book on constitutional law, a heap that stood four feet high by his desk, ferreting out the basis for an argument so crystalline, so compelling, that no man on the street could misunderstand. Harry Sacher, one of the defense lawyers, told me that he regarded Bob as a foremost lay constitutional authority in the land. And Dennis went further: Bob combined a knowledge of law with a knowledge of politics, could strip the rhetoric of Blackstone to the bare, essential political facts beneath.

Bob's grasp of American history was drawn into play: this was a case like none since the time of the Alien and Sedition Act of 1798. He studied the trials of that time with typical passion and applied the moral of that time to this day.

It was a political trial of Communists and there were lessons for the defense in the case of the Cologne Communists almost a century before. I came upon him as he sat before the open pages of the record in that ancient trial.

The illusion many have that the Communists were accorded a fair trial must be destroyed: he sat up many days and nights to prove his contention that they were denied the due process of law the Constitution guaranteed, the right to a trial of their peers. He studied the workings of the Grand Jury system and the petit juries of the New York district to demonstrate incontrovertibly that old Judge John Knox had systematically, with icy deliberation, transformed the method to select jurors so

that the courts could weed out workingmen, trade unionists, Negroes, the working-class Jews.

Tomes could be written, I am certain that some day they will, of his observations, his conclusions, his sagacious analysis of every step in this case. Nothing escaped his attention, neither the rantings of the stoolpigeon brigade, and the inevitable contradictions into which their lies entrapped them, nor the wily comments of the judge, Harold A. Medina, who meshed his findings with the strategy of the prosecutors, nor the evidence of racist prejudice which the Court revealed. Characteristic was his outrage and clarity when the judge insultingly admonished Davis, twice elected Councilman of the city of New York, a Councilman while he stood trial, a foremost tribune of the working class and of the Negro people, "to be a good boy." The admonition came while Davis was on the witness stand, came after the judge scoffed frequently at Davis' arguments, when a tone, an attitude, crept into his voice which he had not used against the white lawyers who felt the sting of his abusive retorts daily, his comments that their arguments were "mighty small potatoes," "poor stuff indeed" and the like, declarations consciously intended, the defense realized, to prejudice the jury against the defendants.

Characteristic is Bob's letter on this matter to Carl Winter, one of the defendants: "The old expression used by the British at Hong Kong in the older times—calling every Chinese, even the most venerable, middle-aged and highly cultured man by the name 'China-boy'—and almost the same way in India—the introduction of the same thing in the Philippines by American officers —it is all of one piece with the insulting term addressed to the most dignified Negro throughout the Southern former slave states—'Boy!' Every Negro is assumed to be so inferior as never to have any status of adult capacity. That we should let that insult stand against one of the foremost Communist leaders—or that the people of Harlem should let it stand against their representative in the New York City Council—is unthinkable."

The letter contained proposals for action in the courtroom and for general publicity to bring the instance to the public attention. "Correspondents should be induced to send stories about this amazing insult to all the papers in Europe and Asia —including Shanghai and Manila, Paris, London, Havana, Buenos Aires, etc. A special effort ought to be made to get

stuff in for use in the Negro weekly press, but maybe it could be gotten to their attention today in time for this week's editions." If genius is the capacity for taking infinite pains, this man owned it—he had even ascertained the deadline observed in the Negro newspapers.

I dropped by often to see Bob and Lydia these days, and listened to him, as he sat in a deck chair on the flagstones of his little terrace in clear and warm weather, the boughs of the trees hanging low, the sparrows chirping in the roadway beyond. After offering me a generous helping from the bottle of rye that his doctors prescribed, he would plunge at once into a discussion of the case, his eyes fastened on me. Once, when I wrote a pamphlet on the trial I came down to exchange views, to get the benefit of his suggestions.

Deathly ill, he spoke with such ardor, such purpose, that I thought of him as a Prometheus tragically chained by the infirmity of the flesh. His spirit, his mind soared, and in this case he traced the course of modern history much as a geologist can see eons in a rock. I knew how he yearned to his depths to be able to sit at the side of his comrades in court, to aid even more effectively than he could here, forty miles away.

From the outset of the case, I learned, speaking to him, that he envisaged the transformation of this prosecution into its opposite. He foresaw the possibility, even the probability, that the sting in the tail of the scorpion could be plunged into its own vitals. It had happened, he argued, in virtually every great labor case in the past century. "From time to time in the history of our country," he said to me one early Sunday morning while the bells chimed in the church down the valley, "the struggle between labor and capital at a high point in history has been forced into the incongruous and narrow form of a criminal trial in a court of law."

Because the men of Haymarket in Chicago led a crusade for an eight-hour day they were tried as murderers in their famous trial. After the formation of the Steel Trust in 1901, "and in the process of consolidation of the steel, copper and oil monopolies," the financiers sought to exterminate the trade unions in the metal and mining industries by trying to hang the officers of the Western Federation of Miners, Moyer and Haywood and Pettibone. Similarly in the Mooney case, the Sacco-Vanzetti case, the Bridgeman case, the trial of himself and his

Who Is That You All Are Going To Whip, Mr. Legree?
—*Daily Worker*, 1925

associates after the unemployed demonstrations of 1930, the Scottsboro case, all the others.

In each episode the issues of the time appear as "criminal" cases—the use of stoolpigeons, rigged juries, biased judges, inflammatory newspaper campaigns, is common—the pattern is identical. However, he said—rising from his chair to stride across the terrace, forgetting in his excitement that such exertion was forbidden, and I suggested gently that he sit down—he said: "However, nearly all of the great 'labor cases' in the last seventy-five years have had a strange and unexpected outcome—from the viewpoint of the ruling class. Instead of the expected defeat of labor and the triumph of their persecutors, they have usually become to some degree, and, I tell you, to an increasing degree, a victory of labor and a defeat of the ruling capitalist class." Very often, he continued, the prosecution of the intended victim, the representative of the working class or of the Negro people, "is changed into its opposite." Some of the greatest victories of the American trade unions and the working class and of the American Negro people resulted from these attempts in the criminal courts to victimize their representatives.

"But in each of these instances the victory for the workers came not automatically, not as a single result of the prosecution's attack, but always," he said, his eyes burning now, "*always* as a result of a counter-attack by the working class, and only in the degree that the great mass of the workers is aroused to a counter-attack."

The main guiding thread is the knowledge that the reserves of the labor movement by this time have become stronger than the reserves of the capitalist class. A fully aroused labor movement, he said, can turn back and disrupt the conspiracy of their oppressors. He had his first lesson during the Moyer, Haywood, Pettibone case in 1907. "Instead of flattening out opposition, I saw, it aroused hundreds of thousands of the working class far beyond the limits of the metal miners' union and beyond the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts." The political movement of the working class, embodied in the Socialist Party, came into the struggle at its first beginning, and soon a vast movement involving millions was under way in defense of the three union leaders.

"I was among the millions that were drawn into the move-

ment: at 23 years of age I was drawn from a purely AFL position into the position of a class fight at all costs and with all means to prevent the hanging of the militant leaders of the working class. I mention my own experience because it was typical of what happened to tens of thousands of young Americans. We became interested at first solely through the elementary and instinctive sense of loyalty that is found in every trade union among most of its members. Through the simple act of contributing ten cents to a defense fund, the process of change and enlightenment of our lives began. We experienced a beginning that was to lead us far. Proudly to write one's name on a list of contributors to the defense of Haywood became an act of devotion which we soon began to understand was a devotion to the one great sacred cause which contained within itself the future of the world."

He illustrated how each of these cases brought hundreds of thousands and millions into conscious motion, many of whom became lasting crusaders for "the one great sacred cause." And even if, on occasion, the working class did not succeed in saving its own, as in the Sacco and Vanzetti case, these men did not die vainly. For as Vanzetti said, who saw this truth, it was *he,* his *cause,* that triumphed, and his persecutors who lost: for a world had been aroused and had learned from his agony to recognize the visage of the tyrant.

But the Scottsboro boys did not die on the electric chair; their cause mobilized millions, set the tone for an epoch; nor were the capitalists at all successful in the hunger trials, for the leaders were set free before serving the three year terms and the unemployed marched until they won unemployment insurance.

And now, similarly, in this time of the medieval thought-control laws, the "loyalty" probes, the pillory of congressional witch-hunting, the Smith Act: Bob predicted that sooner or later, and probably sooner than many believe, the outrages will propel millions into opposition. "There is the basis," he concluded, "for a similar conclusion to this repression that our nation saw in the time of the Alien and Sedition law. The Federalists who passed it were swept out of power in 1800 and their party was shattered by the people's revulsion."

And so his bright eyes followed every turn of national and world politics, every twist in the trials, and the years passed, 1948, 1949, 1950, 1951. Not once in this time could he come

down the valley the two-score miles to the metropolis to see his comrades. They came to him often, as often as Lydia felt that his health permitted them to come, and he would be exultant in their company. They listened to his proposals, his comments, remembered his hearty laughter, his buoyant confidence.

One day, in November of 1951, on a gray overcast dawn, Lydia awoke to find him writhing in dreadful pain. She jumped from bed and summoned the doctor who removed him at once to the nearest hospital, at Ossining, three miles away. I hastened to the little dim anteroom of the hospital where Lydia stood watch, allowed occasionally to enter the ward where he lay, unconscious under oxygen. I tiptoed down the corridor and stood at the door a moment, saw the heave of his big chest as he gasped for breath, for life. I noticed the somber air of the doctors.

Several times he groped up from the depths and each time his eyes turned, searching for Lydia. He smiled at her faintly, his fingers twisting toward her. Then his eyes closed again and he was unconscious. Hours later he fought his way back to light and to Lydia who heard him murmur, "I'll write Steve in the morning." Nelson, whom he loved perhaps more than any other man, was in prison, and Bob had worked hard on his case, was making notes for suggestions on the defense to send Steve the evening before.

And once again, eluding the clutch of the only enemy who could defeat him, he asked Lydia who of his comrades were here, he wanted them at his side, and as she replied his eyes closed forever.

Outside in the anteroom, a delegation of three party leaders had just arrived, speeding up from Manhattan when they had got the news. It was a commentary on his life, I thought, that two of the three were Negroes: Claudia Jones, beautiful as a bronze goddess, Pettis Perry, a sturdy dark man with a noble face, one of the party's foremost theoreticians today, who had been illiterate when he joined Bob's party in the time of the Scottsboro case, and Betty Gannett, an intense, tireless, dynamic woman who had worked at Bob's side for more than a quarter century. All three had hastened to Bob from the courtroom in Foley Square where they were on trial in the second Smith Act case. They stood a long moment at his cot, gazing at the body of this man of enormous life, courage, wisdom, at their Fighting Bob, their beloved comrade.

The Invincible

So THIS eagle out of Texas slept.

Sleep, Bob Minor, you have earned your rest. You flew to help all men, everywhere, whenever they had need for you and your strength, your courage, your great heart. Apostle of man's liberty, you chose your home where liberty is not. Peace is where the tempest blows, the poet has said, and there you lived, gloriously.

Sleep gently at the side of the giants. You return to eternity, eternal, for your cause can never die. The earth is better for the years you walked it in that long, frontiersman's stride, the pioneer sowing the seeds of freedom. You died, knowing the crop was already as high as a man's heart. You could see the tender gold of the young grain.

The mark you left—Man (X) His Mark, as you wrote long ago—is indelibly graven. But the mark of the unknown, the X, has taken name, for mankind is learning the wondrously rich alphabet of life. It is written in many languages on all the singing continents. The dream you first heard from the lips of the old Irish mule driven on the prairies yesterday, this dream of socialism, is today's deed—on the banks of the Yangtse, on the Volga, the Dnieper, the Elbe, the Danube, and though you did not live, not quite, to reach that day, it will be bright on the banks of your beloved Hudson, your Rio Grande, as it will be on the far-off Ganges and Tiber, the Nile and the Amazon.

That you knew as the darkness was coming down, engulfing you. You knew. Men saw it in the serenity of your face as you lay in the room of death in your little town, the neighbors, fathers and mothers, Americans of varied politics, some, like the Roman Catholic family who named a child after you, stood tearful among the mountains of flowers that men and women and children sent to honor your memory. I saw them. And they

knew it in the great hall the next day in Manhattan where eighteen hundred, scorning the spying eye of the inquisitors, streamed from the tenement streets to honor your life. The tears that fell in grief fell also in gratitude, in love, for they knew your life and your deed.

There were those who mourned but who could not come, your comrades who were still behind prison bars. As they lay in the dark of their cells that night, they thought of you a long time while the wardens made their rounds. They wrote, like Jack Stachel to Lydia of your "many-sided genius." And far away in the clapboard shacks of Alabama, black fathers and mothers remembered Scottsboro and blessed your memory. And when the lid of the coffin was lowered for the last time, they walked from the hall into a cold New York night knowing that there will be bright daylight, because you, men and women like you, today's Prometheans, lived.

So this story is done. One man's life, one Communist's life, a Communist leader. A unique life? He would have contended that it is not unique, that he is but one of many. And that is true. It is true, too, that he was multitudes: through his great heart ran the aspirations of mankind and he lived to witness the turning point in humanity's long, bloody march from the Kingdom of Necessity to the Realm of Freedom.

Consider: he was born, in 1884, a short walk from the dun walls of the Alamo, only a year after the passionate, tough, soaring genius by the name of Karl Marx died far off in London. Marx, beset by poverty, hungry often, had a dream, ages old, which he transformed into a triumphant science. The word "socialism"—the brotherhood of man—became more than a vision of seers and laborers.

When the Texan was 33, he stood in the center of the world and saw, with his own keen eye, the irrevocable turn in the tide of man. When he was 55, in 1939, he witnessed the supreme effort to thwart humanity's will and he lived to see its irrevocable failure. When he was 65, in 1949, he exulted as six hundred millions in the land of Confucius and Mao Tse-tung marched from the long dark into the sunlit road to Socialism.

How often did I hear him tally the sums, humanity's bookkeeper, savoring the fateful arithmetic: two hundred and more millions of the Soviet peoples, another hundred millions from the North Sea to the Adriatic, the six hundred Chinese millions,

nine hundred millions in all, well over the third of all humanity. He lived to see what the Marxists knew would come, the giant awakening of the colonial peoples, China liberated, India on the march, the African continent astir from Port Said to Johannesburg, their march keeping step with that of the world's workingmen: the supreme fact of our time.

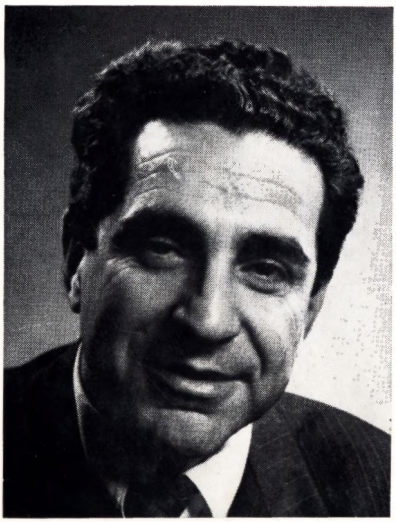
The man who helped lay the lonely track for the nation's railroads lived into the atomic age. And, as he realized honoring John Reed, the companion of his youth, the thermonuclear terror was a cloud over the earth. But he surmised, having looked long into the heart of mankind, that life will triumph over death. The political atom, split in 1917, as he said, had the mightier power. Had he lived into 1955 he would have witnessed the confirmation of his belief, as humanity, all tongues like one, cried, "So far and no farther. Ban the bomb of hell!"

He witnessed the rise of a man named McCarthy and though he did not live to see his eclipse, he knew that time would come. He did not live to see his comrades, Gene and Jack and Trachtenberg, all the others, walk from jail; he did live to witness the arrest of many others of his party and of other parties.

I can see the bright gleam of his eye, can hear his joyous shout "Eeeya," the upswing of his big arms flung skyward, had he lived to read the words of the Negro jurist, Judge Hastie, who appealed for the return of the hallowed First Amendment, the right of free men to speak freely. He would have rejoiced that i twas a Negro who spoke these words in a high court. Naturally it would have been a Negro, he would have said; he had been saying that most of his years.

Yes, I heard him say that the plans of tyrants go oft awry, are turned into their opposite by those who live under the axe. He would have cried, with all the vibrant timbre of his voice: "Fight, fight the harder, Americans, for when you fight you are invincible."

He would have seen, as he himself wrote Lydia from prison, "the big, flashing, awe-inspiring, incredible blazes of color flashing over the billions of light-years of sky," life on "the majestic scale" for which he labored the days of his years. He would have heard the song rising from all the horizons.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BORN in 1904, son of an immigrant blacksmith, Joseph North went to work at the age of 12 in a Pennsylvania textile mill. From the age of thirteen he worked summers in the shipyards of his home town until he completed his education, getting his Bachelor of Arts degree at the University of Pennsylvania. After a few years in daily journalism, he began writing for the labor press in the twenties, and later became editor of the *Labor Defender,* at the time of the Scottsboro case. In 1934 he was a founder of the weekly *New Masses* and served as editor during most of the fifteen years of its existence. During this period North also became noted for his memorable reportage. He covered the big strikes of the thirties, the movements of the unemployed and the farmers, and the battles for Negro rights in the South. Covering the Spanish war for the *Daily Worker* and the *New Masses,* he was the only American correspondent to cross the Ebro with the International Brigades. On his return he traveled frequently throughout the land as well as in Mexico and Cuba. He was in Europe as war correspondent during World War II, writing from London under the Blitz, and from the concentration camp of Dachau on V-E day. His syndicated column "Assignment U.S.A.," appears in the *Daily Worker* and *The Worker.* His reportage from Spain is in several anthologies of that war. North was one of the editors of *Proletarian Literature in the United States,* an anthology of the writings of the thirties. He is now completing a book based on his own experiences which describes the moral and intellectual impact of the great events of the past three decades.

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